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THE LIFE OF JOHN JERVIS ADMIRAL LORD ST. VINCENT

THE LIFE OF JOHN JERVIS ADMIRAL LORD ST. VINCENT

BY CAPTAIN W. V. ANSON, R.N.
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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS, MAPS, AND PLANS

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PREFACE

THE very name of St. Vincent seems to be associated with the word "discipline." History is full of instances where, in strenuous and difficult times, when every one is looking for the one man capable of dealing with the situation to appear, he suddenly steps on to the stage. In the latter part of the eighteenth century a man of a stern and unbending nature was wanted in the English Navy; a man who could mould the characters of brave but very rough men, many of whom had been forced into a sea-life against their will, and transform them into the fine fighting material and splendid seamen they eventually became.

Put into the Navy by Anson, who was a Staffordshire man like himself, John Jervis started with nothing to help him beyond Anson's nomination, and a letter afterwards, asking Saunders to look after him; and it was by sheer hard work and ability that he rose to the position he ultimately held. It was, doubtless, the hard battle he had to fight as a lad in order to force his way up that produced in him the stern simplicity and hard exterior (hiding a warm nature underneath) which made him feared, indeed, but respected and obeyed with all the loyalty a good and

able man is sure to win from those who serve under him and trust him.

The sea never pardons a mistake. Sir Charles Napier says:

"An ignorant officer is a murderer. All brave men confide in the knowledge he is supposed to possess; and when the death-trial comes their generous blood flows in vain. Merciful God! How can an ignorant man charge himself with so much bloodshed? I have studied war long, earnestly and deeply, but yet I tremble at my own deficiencies."

If these words be true of the soldier, how much more true are they of the sailor, who has not only the enemy, but wind and waves to contend with?

St. Vincent was an able, a brave, an indefatigable officer, and the strict discipline he instilled into the naval service enabled him, and Nelson after him, to win those battles over the French and Spanish that made England and Europe free. It has been said that "all preparation for war must precede the outbreak of hostilities," and that "in the building-up of the military edifice—unless that rests solidly on discipline—the work of the mason is in vain." St. Vincent was the mason who built up the solid foundation of discipline which Nelson used so brilliantly—and without which his victories would have been almost impossible.

There is something fascinating in the lives of these stern, strong men whose unbending will guided England's destinies in the time of her trials. The eighteenth century was a period

on which we cannot look back with any feeling of pride at the moral and social condition of our country, and these great men stand out more prominent and in stronger relief from the darkness of their background.

Anson, trained in a school of hardship, had done much to create a spirit of sturdy resistance to the enervating tendencies of the age. His example had been followed by Hawke, De Saumarez, Saunders, Howe, Rodney, and Duncan, and, now, St. Vincent, his former *protégé*, carried on the same tradition.

It is not always the men who do the world's work that gain the high reward of the popular hero. In the arts and sciences, no less than on the battle-field, it is only when the spirit of the time and the surrounding atmosphere are favourable that a great leader can hope to reap his due share of recognition. For instance, it is only lately that the work of that great navigator, Captain Cook, has been estimated at its proper value, in spite of the fact that his surveys in all parts of the world stand to this day, and were carried out with the help of instruments so primitive as to be a marvel to all who see the results obtained with them.

St. Vincent does not appear in any of our great memorials. He may not always have been popular. He was, perhaps, too stern in his ideas, too straight in his outspoken criticism of what he held to be wrong. Yet, as Tennyson says :

> "It was our ancient policy, my Lords—
> To fling whate'er we felt,
> Not fearing, into words."

and—

> "Yea, let all good things await
> Him who cares not to be great
> But as he saves or serves the State."

Many a man will feel heartened and strengthened, when the time of trial comes, as come it must, by having read of the lives of these great men, and by the belief that they may still be watching with keenest interest those who now or in the future may be entrusted with the task of upholding the cause of the country which they lived and died to save.

In writing this life, I owe thanks to Lady Parker for allowing me free access to all St. Vincent's letters and papers.[1] I am also indebted to Tucker's life of St. Vincent published in 1844. As Tucker had access to St. Vincent's papers, and we have drawn upon the same sources, there must necessarily be a good deal of matter which is the same in both books. Tucker's father was Secretary to Lord St. Vincent, and knew him perhaps better than any one else, with the possible exception of Dr. Baird, to whom St. Vincent constantly wrote about the service, especially in the latter part of his life. I have also searched carefully through the large collection of MSS. in the British Museum and the Record Offices for anything that might throw fresh light on my subject.

I am much indebted to Mr. Leonard Crosslé for valuable assistance.

[1] St. Vincent left all his papers to Admiral Sir William Parker, the last of Nelson's captains, who was a nephew of St. Vincent and a great favourite of both him and Nelson.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

HIS EARLY LIFE

1735—1769

Birth and Education of J. Jervis—Entry into the Navy—Service in the West Indies—Sails with Boscawen—Serves under Saunders—Action in the *Experiment* with the xebeque—Serves in Canada under Sir Charles Saunders—The capture of Quebec—Relations with Wolfe—Appointed to command of *Scorpion*—Enforces obedience in the *Albany*—Service in Canada—Promoted to post-captain in the *Gosport*—Peace consigns him to the shore pp. 1—23

CHAPTER II

SERVICE AS CAPTAIN

1769—1774

Appointed to the *Alarm*—Liberates two Turkish slaves—Shipwrecked in the Bay of Marseilles—His attachment to Miss Parker—Attendance on the Duke of Gloucester in Italy—Paid off and travels with Barrington on the Continent . . pp. 24—40

CHAPTER III

EFFICIENCY AND HONOURS

1775—1782

Appointed to the *Foudroyant*—The battle of Ushant—The subsequent court-martial on Keppel—Serves under Sir Charles Hardy—Under Barrington—Spirited action and capture of the *Pégase*, in which he is wounded—Serves under Howe at the relief of Gibraltar—His splendid school for officers in *Foudroyant* and care for those who served under him—Letters from Barré and Keppel pp. 41—72

CHAPTER IV

TROUBLOUS TIMES

1775—1790

American Independence—Rodney's letter—Discipline in the Navy bad—The country impoverished by the war—Foreign fleets in the Channel—Ireland in a perturbed state—The *Foudroyant* pays off—Jervis enters Parliament—His speeches in the House—Hoists his flag in the *Prince*—Hereditary claims to advancement . . . . . pp. 73—84

CHAPTER V

THE NINE YEARS WAR

1792—1802

The French Revolution—War with France—Jervis hoists his flag in the *Boyne* and sails for the West Indies with a squadron—Sir Charles Grey commands the forces—The distinguished officers who served under him—Attack on Martinique—Captain Faulkner's intrepid action—Yellow fever amongst the forces—Illness of Sir John Jervis—Obtains permission to retire, but, on the arrival of French reinforcements under Victor Hugues, remains on the station—Admiral Caldwell arrives with reinforcements—Sir John Jervis, with Sir Charles Grey on board, returns home—The *Boyne* arrives at Spithead and is burnt . pp. 85—109

CHAPTER VI

THE MEDITERRANEAN COMMAND

1795—1796

Sir John Jervis appointed to command in the Mediterranean—Sails in the *Lively*—Hoists his flag in the *Victory* at San Fiorenzo Bay—His discipline—He meets Nelson—The outlook on the station—Bonaparte's advance into Italy—Jervis communicates with Austrian generals—Scarcity of supplies—Close blockade of Toulon—Writes to the Admiralty about Nelson—Toulon a wearisome command—The Neapolitan Government deserts us—The Pope purchases peace—Leghorn taken by Bonaparte—Fremantle carries off all English supplies and stores, etc.—Nelson seizes Ferrajo in Elba—Difficulty of holding Corsica .pp. 110—130

CHAPTER VII

THE MEDITERRANEAN COMMAND (*continued*)

1796—1797

War with Spain imminent—Sir John Jervis collects his forces—Admiral Mann leaves Cadiz and Richery slips out—Lángara, the Spanish admiral, sails for Toulon with nineteen ships—Admiral Mann, having arrived without provisions, is sent back to Gibraltar—Distress of the blockading fleet off Toulon—The Government decide to abandon the Mediterranean, being afraid of danger nearer home—Mann looked for at San Fiorenzo, but does not arrive, having been chased into Gibraltar—He goes home—Sir John Jervis leaves San Fiorenzo with the fleet—They encounter storms and arrive at Gibraltar . pp. 131—146

CHAPTER VIII

THE ABANDONMENT OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

1796—1797

The British Government uncertain about the abandonment of the Mediterranean—Sir John Jervis proceeds to the Tagus—Accidents to ships there—Jervis's anxiety about Nelson relieving Porto Ferrajo—Letters to Nelson and Bowen—Nelson rejoins—Battle of St. Vincent—Memorandum of Commander-in-Chief after the battle—Landing of the prisoners—Comments on the battle—Rewards . . . . . pp. 147—177

CHAPTER IX

THE BLOCKADE OF CADIZ

1797

St. Vincent in the Tagus—Blockade of Cadiz—The incident at Belem Castle—The enemy at sea—Promptly checked—Stories of St. Vincent—Causes of the mutinous spirit in the Fleet—Extracts from the Log of the *Clyde*—The contagion of the mutiny reaches the ships at Cadiz—Captain Maitland's action—Mutinous ships sent by Admiralty to St. Vincent—His dealing with the ships—Constant employment—Nelson sent to Teneriffe—Nelson goes home—Returns to the fleet—St. Vincent still blockading—Strict but just—The *Marlborough*—Success of his discipline pp. 178—202

CHAPTER X

THE BLOCKADE OF CADIZ AND THE EVENTS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

1797—1799

Dealings with mutiny off Cadiz—Winter off Lisbon—Nelson chosen for the Mediterranean over the heads of other officers—Jealousy of Sir John Orde—St. Vincent and Sir John Orde—Troubridge and his ships sent to join Nelson—St. Vincent repairs to Gibraltar—Stories of Gibraltar—Sir Sydney Smith—Nelson follows Bonaparte to Egypt—Troubridge's letter after the Nile—Repairs of ships—D'Esterre-Darby—Makes water-tanks at Gibraltar—More stories—He establishes the Garrison Library at Gibraltar—Sir Isaac Coffin—St. Vincent's illness—He follows the Brest fleet—Goes on shore at Port Mahon—Nelson's letters—St. Vincent gives up command to Lord Keith and returns to England and strikes his flag . . . . . pp. 203—253

CHAPTER XI

THE CHANNEL FLEET

1799—1801

St. Vincent goes to Rochetts—Sir John Orde—Expedition to Brest—Selected for command of the Channel—The Channel Fleet—His discipline—Blockade of Brest—Blown away—Returns to rigorous blockade—Disaffection of officers unused to his discipline—Dr. Baird and his care of the fleet—Actions of Campbell, Hamilton, and Coghlan—Stories of St. Vincent—The Naval Asylum for Orphans—St. Vincent returns to Tor Bay—Goes to live at Torr Abbey . . . . . pp. 254—281

CHAPTER XII

FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY

1801—1802

Pitt resigns—St. Vincent as First Lord of the Admiralty—Tucker—Discipline and inspection of the dockyards—Encounters much opposition—Napoleon and the peace—Ships for the Baltic—The Royal Marines—Sir James Saumarez and his action off Gibraltar—His victory—Mazzaredo—Peace of Amiens—Plymouth breakwater . . . . . pp. 282—300

CHAPTER XIII

ST. VINCENT'S TROUBLED POLITICAL LIFE

1802—1807

Declaration of war with France—Pitt's criticism of St. Vincent's policy—Sir Edward Pellew's testimony—England overpoweringly strong in her well-disciplined crews—France weak in her want of training—Napoleon deceives Nelson—Interview with the King—St. Vincent called on to serve again in command of Channel Fleet—Hoists the Union at the main—Loss of his nephew, William Henry Jervis—Captain William Parker—Appreciation of Grenville at the Admiralty . . . . . pp. 301—318

CHAPTER XIV

THE END

1807—1823

St. Vincent's old age—His character—His friends—His grief over the loss of Troubridge—His politics and speeches—Sir Frederick Maitland—Napoleon—Sir William Parker—St. Vincent visits the south of France—He sinks and dies—The end . pp. 319—339

APPENDICES 341

INDEX 361

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

SIR JOHN JERVIS, K.B., ADMIRAL OF THE WHITE AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF IN THE WEST INDIES . *Frontispiece*
From a print lent by Messrs. T. H. Parker, printsellers, 45 Whitcomb St., London.

FACING PAGE

VICE-ADMIRAL THE HON. A. KEPPEL 42
From a print lent by Messrs. T. H. Parker.

ADMIRAL BARRINGTON 58

CAPTAIN FAULKNOR STORMING FORT ROYAL, MARTINIQUE 96
By kind permission of Messrs. T. H. Parker.

VICE-ADMIRAL SIR THOMAS FRANCIS FREMANTLE, G.C.B. 126

COMMEMORATION OF BATTLE OF ST. VINCENT . . 168

REAR-ADMIRAL SIR THOMAS TROUBRIDGE, BART. . . 216
From a print lent by Messrs. T. H. Parker.

ADMIRAL THE EARL OF ST. VINCENT, K.B. . . . 282
From a painting in the possession of Lady Parker.

VICE-ADMIRAL SIR JAMES SAUMAREZ, K.B. . . . 290

ADMIRAL THE EARL OF ST. VINCENT, K.B. . . . 312
From an engraving by H. Robinson after the painting by John Hoppner in St. James's Palace

PLANS AND MAPS

QUEBEC 16

THE MEDITERRANEAN OUTLOOK 116

BATTLE OF ST. VINCENT, I. TO VIII. . . . 158—167

PLAN OF BREST 262

LIFE OF ADMIRAL LORD ST. VINCENT

CHAPTER I

HIS EARLY LIFE

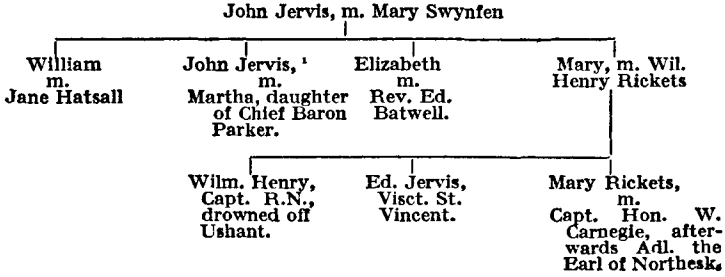
1735—1769

"Youth is properly the forming time, that time in which a man makes himself, or is made, what he is for ever to be."—RUSKIN.

JOHN JERVIS was born on January 20th, 1735. The family of Jervis had been long established in Staffordshire (a county noted for the sturdy vigour and manliness of its sons) and in the reign of Edward III. it possessed considerable estates at Chab-Kyll, near Meaford. His mother came of an old Worcestershire family. Her grandfather, John Swynfen, sat for Tamworth under Charles I., through the Protectorate and on into the reign of Charles II.

As we constantly find in the letters of St. Vincent to Dr. Baird references to the Rickets

and Northesk families, the following tree will indicate the relationships:


John Jervis, m. Mary Swynfen
William m. Jane Hatsall
John Jervis,[1] m. Martha, daughter of Chief Baron Parker.
Elizabeth m. Rev. Ed. Batwell.
Mary, m. Wil. Henry Rickets
Wilm. Henry, Capt. R.N., drowned off Ushant.
Ed. Jervis, Visct. St. Vincent.
Mary Rickets, m. Capt. Hon. W. Carnegie, afterwards Adl. the Earl of Northesk.

John Jervis was first sent to the free school at Burton-on-Trent, and he mentions the great severity of the master, the Rev. Humphrey Jackson, and also states that his wife was a great shrew.

In 1745, when the Young Pretender marched through the country and appeared at Leek, in Staffordshire, all the boys wore plaid ribbons except Jervis and another boy called Dick Meux —who were pelted as Constitutionalists and Whigs in consequence.

It is interesting—now that there is so much discussion as to the educational value of Greek —to note that Jervis was looked upon as the best Greek scholar in the school, and was selected by the examiner to read a passage from Homer.

He was intended by his father to follow his own profession of the law, but in 1747, Mr. Jervis being appointed Counsel to the

[1] The subject of this memoir.

Admiralty and Auditor of Greenwich Hospital, his son was removed from the Burton school to Swindell's Academy at Greenwich. Jervis himself used to declare that what influenced him in selecting the Navy as a carcer was the advice of his father's coachman, a man called Pinkthorne, who recommended the sea, and condemned all lawyers as rogues; but there were probably other reasons besides, for at the Greenwich school he became a great friend of "Dicky" Strachan (the father of Admiral Sir Richard Strachan). Young Strachan had already served as a midshipman, and the two friends ran away to Woolwich. Jervis's relations tried in vain to induce him to return, but when he had once evinced his predilection for the sea no expostulations on the part of his parents could shake him. Accordingly, he was introduced by his paternal uncle, Mr. John Parker of the Exchequer, to Lord Anson, then at the Admiralty (and a connection of his own) and was shortly afterwards placed on board the *Gloucester* (Captain Storr), carrying the broad pennant of Commodore the Honourable George Townshend, to whom he was introduced by Lord Wenlock.

The *Gloucester* sailed for Port Royal, where she lay for a year as guardship, and Mr. Jervis, not being well off, was only able to give his son £20 for his outfit, a sum which had to cover his private expenses as well.

Being then only thirteen years of age, and of a very active and lively disposition, he felt that to remain on board the *Gloucester* was not the best thing for him. The idleness and monotony of life on board the Guardship he found too dull and uninstructive, while the amusements on shore were too dissipated and dear. For these reasons he volunteered regularly for service in any ship that happened to be putting to sea or going on any expedition of importance, and when compelled to remain in port he devoted his time to study, and showed, it is said, a surprising aptitude and memory for all branches of professional and general knowledge. At one time he was lent to the *Ferret* sloop, Captain Scroope, in which vessel he was ordered to the Mosquito Coast, to force a trade. While on this station he ran very short of money, but by rigid economy he soon extricated himself from the difficulties in which he was placed by not receiving any supplies from home. The first lieutenant, Mr. Lemprière, and Mr. Williamson, the Master (afterwards lost in the *Ramillies*), were very clever fellows, and from them he received the best possible instruction in his profession.

In 1753 he returned to England in the *Sphinx* (Captain Wheeler), from which ship he wrote the following letter to his sister, Mary Jervis, while stationed in the West Indies:

"'SPHINX,'
"*April 12th*, 1753.

"MY DEAR SISTER,

"There are many entertainments and public assemblies here, but they are rather above my sphere, many inconveniences and expenses attending them, so that my chief employ, when from my duty, is reading, studying navigation, and perusing my old letters, of which I have almost enough to make an octavo volume.

"Yours,

"JERVIS."

Captain Wheeler was a Staffordshire man, very amiable and very talented, and Jervis received great kindness from him, and afterwards returned with him to England, when, the *Sphinx* having been paid off, he was transferred for a few months to the *William and Mary* yacht. Then he passed his examination at the Navy Office, and was promoted as a lieutenant into the *Royal Anne*, formerly called the *Royal George*, and soon afterwards into the *Devonshire*. He had been in the West Indies from 1748 to 1754, and it can easily be understood that by no imaginable economy would it have been possible for him, living with other officers, to make the £20 he received from his father, in 1748, suffice for all his wants during these seven years, even had he realised from the outset that he was not to receive a farthing more from his father. Many years afterwards he used to tell the following story:

"My father had a very large family, with limited means. He gave me £20 at starting, and that was all he gave me. After I had been a considerable time on the station I drew on him for £20 more, but this bill came back protested. I was mortified at this rebuke, and made a vow, which I have ever since kept, that I would never draw another bill without the certainty of its being paid. I immediately changed my mode of living, quitted my mess, living alone, and took up the ship's allowance, which I found quite sufficient; washed and mended my own clothes, made a pair of trousers out of the ticking of my own bed; and, having by these means saved as much money as would redeem my honour, I took up the bill; and from that time to this [he would add with great energy] I have taken care to keep within my means" (Brenton, *Life of St. Vincent*, vol. i. pp. 19, 20).

Though he seems to have been deeply mortified by his pecuniary distress, it formed in him a lofty spirit of independence, which was never quenched in after-life. He had been taught to rely upon himself. The lesson had imbued him with that confidence in his own resources which was his distinguishing characteristic, and to which his superiority over other men was largely due. In order to find money for the returned bill, he had to effect his discharge from one ship to another, so as to obtain his pay-tickets, which he contrived to sell at 40 per cent. discount; and during the remainder of his time upon the station his

life was one continual struggle with pinching and privation. He sold all his own bedding and slept on the bare deck; he never allowed himself any fresh meat, nor the fruit or vegetables (which are so necessary and so cheap in the West Indies) except when he was able to barter with the negroes some small part of his ship's provisions in exchange for them. He had no money to spend on shore, and so he kept on board. From an old quartermaster called Drysdale, who had been mate of a merchant vessel, he received the greatest assistance in learning navigation, a science in which he became very proficient.

At the close of 1754, whilst Jervis was serving in the *Devonshire*, it became clear that war with France was imminent. Supplies were unanimously voted in Parliament, and a powerful fleet was fitted out to oppose the force which France had collected at Brest for service on the American coast. Admiral Lord Anson took command, and Jervis, who had just passed an excellent examination as a lieutenant, was ordered to Chatham to assist in fitting out the *Prince*, which was to be Anson's flagship, with Captain Saunders as flag-captain, and he quickly won a high place in the good opinion of his captain.

In February 1755 Jervis was appointed junior lieutenant of the *Royal George*, and in March was transferred to the *Nottingham*. During

February the Admiralty, under Lord Anson's Administration, had prepared a fleet of thirty ships of the line ready for sea. Warlike preparations were proceeding busily on both sides of the Channel. When the French fleet, carrying Baron Dickaw, the French general, and his troops, was ready for sea, Vice-Admiral Boscawen, with eleven ships of the line (including the *Nottingham*) and one frigate, was ordered to intercept them. We were not at war, but letters of marque and reprisal had been issued. Boscawen captured two of the French ships, the others escaping in a fog. His fleet returned to England, the crews being in a terrible state of sickness.

It is not necessary here to give an account of the loss of Minorca and Admiral Byng's failure—as these events are too well known to bear recapitulation—but when Sir Edward Hawke was sent out to relieve Admiral Byng it was thought so desirable that Captain Saunders should be the second in command that he was promoted specially, in order to allow him to hoist his flag—such confidence had the First Lord in his abilities. Saunders again selected Jervis to accompany him.

In March 1756, when the *Dorchester* was attached to the Mediterranean Fleet, Lieutenant Jervis was appointed to her, but soon afterwards was removed to the *Prince*, in which ship Admiral Saunders flew his flag, and when next

year he shifted to the *Culloden*, he took Jervis with him as his second lieutenant. At this time Jervis had his first opportunity of distinguishing himself, for Captain Strachan, who commanded a small sloop called the *Experiment*, having left his ship owing to illness, Jervis was appointed captain of her, and received orders to cruise off Catalonia. On March 17th, 1756, as the *Experiment* was steering her course, she sighted a French privateer xebeque. Several shots were fired to bring her to, and the *Experiment* gave chase. The xebeque hoisted Moorish colours and crowded all sail to get away, although she was much the larger and more powerful of the two. She was also much the faster, and when, towards evening, it became evident that she could not be overtaken, the *Experiment* gave up the chase and resumed her course. The privateer, mistaking this action for an attempt to escape, stood after her, and at 7.30 was within gun-shot. An action commenced and lasted nearly three hours, when the Frenchman made off. The English ship then gave chase with all the sail she could clap on, but was again unable to overtake the Frenchman, though she chased all night. At daylight the xebeque was out of sight. The *Experiment* had one midshipman killed and several men wounded. Her hull and mainmast had been shot through in several places, and, as it was blowing hard,

she had to shorten sail. At 10 a.m. the xebeque was again sighted. In spite of the damage he had suffered, Jervis once more made all sail in pursuit, and, although the wind increased to a gale towards the afternoon, he stood on after her till the privateer was seen to go through the Straits of Gibraltar, when Jervis at last gave up and proceeded to Gibraltar to refit. It was a spirited action with a much larger vessel as his opponent, and did him great credit.

Now came what was the most important incident in Jervis's early life. An expedition on a large scale having been decided on against Quebec, Sir Charles Saunders was appointed to superintend it in charge of the naval forces. He was, therefore, recalled from the Mediterranean and shifted his flag into the *Neptune*, Jervis accompanying him as first lieutenant. Major-General Sir James Wolfe, who was in command of the military forces, and his aide-de-camp, Colonel Barré, were the guests of the admiral, and a great friendship sprang up between these two and Lieutenant Jervis. General Wolfe had been an old schoolmate of his, and so intimate did the two friends now become that when, on the eve of battle, Wolfe needed some one whom he could entrust with the most important and confidential mission possible, he chose his friend Jervis. With Colonel Barré Jervis maintained a close

friendship to the end of his life. It was on February 16th, 1759, that Admiral Saunders, who the day before had received his commission as Vice-Admiral of the Blue, hoisted his flag on board the *Neptune* (90). Very bad weather was experienced on the passage across the Atlantic. The fleet reached Halifax on April 30th, after encountering much ice and snow, and on May 13th sailed for Louisbourg, arriving there on May 16th. Admiral Durell had already been sent from Halifax to cruise off the mouth of the St. Lawrence and block the supplies which the French were expecting at Quebec, and he arrived and passed up the river, though too late to prevent some French ships from getting through. On June 4th the fleet conveying the troops got under weigh in Louisbourg harbour, and sailed for Quebec, a confident spirit pervading all ranks. The coast of Newfoundland was sighted on June 7th, and the island of Anticosti was passed on June 13th. The difficulties of navigation in the St. Lawrence were great, and, as the best French pilot, De Vitri, had been given to Admiral Durell, Admiral Saunders took with him a pilot called Rabi, who turned out to be of little use. Fortunately, Admiral Saunders was a man of great resource and a very able sailor and pilot. He conducted the fleet in safety up the river in spite of frequent head-winds, and they arrived on June 7th and anchored off the Isle of Orleans,

opposite the Isle of Beauport, an outlying defence below Quebec.

The fleet consisted of twenty-two ships of the line, thirteen frigates, numerous transports and river craft. The troops numbered 8,635 men. The French troops were numerically superior and lay behind entrenchments singularly aided by nature. About Quebec the bank of the river was precipitous, while below it earthworks had been thrown up from the Falls of the Montmorency, almost opposite the British ships, to the river St. Charles, near the city. The French force of 15,000 men included 5,000 militia and a number of Indians, these last being of doubtful value. It is related that warfare was carried on in this part of the world between the English and French in a revolting, cruel, and barbarous manner; but the French were said to be the worst offenders. Scalps were taken by the regulars on both sides, following the example of the Indians. The plan of Montcalm was to act on the defensive, whilst the command of the sea enabled the British to make good their own losses while preventing reinforcements from reaching the French, and to shift their troops up or down river so as to attack first one point and then another. Montcalm hoped that, by protracting the siege, the advent of winter would force the British ships out of the river to escape the ice, and thus free him of their presence. On July 29th Wolfe,

having spent some five weeks before Quebec and finding the summer was nearly past and that a good deal of his ammunition had been used, determined on decisive action, since time was slipping away, and he must justify himself to the British minister; he therefore made up his mind to attack the French in their entrenchments on their left or eastern flank, near the Montmorency Falls. This attack proved a complete failure, our casualties being 420 men and 30 officers killed and wounded. The confidence of the troops in Wolfe was much shaken by this defeat, and it preyed on his mind so terribly that he fretted and worried himself into a fever.

It was in this month of July that Jervis had his first chance of distinguishing himself. Wolfe wanted to get his transports with troops taken up the river and past Quebec, and, Captain Cook having surveyed the passage for the boats, in which operation he was interrupted by an Indian attack, Jervis was selected by Saunders to lead in the *Porcupine*. He took General Wolfe on board, the transports following. The station to which the *Porcupine* was bound lay a little below the Falls of Montmorency, but just as she got close under the guns of Quebec it fell a dead calm, and the stream of the river, which is exceedingly swift at this point, carried the ship rapidly towards the flats and within reach of the guns of the

battery of Fort Louis. No sooner was the helplessness of the *Porcupine* perceived by the enemy than they opened fire upon her from both sides of the river, and she was in imminent danger of being destroyed before the eyes of the British army. As every one knew the British general was on board, this would have had a very demoralising effect on the expedition. But Jervis showed his promptness and resource in a moment of danger. He got sweeps out, hoisted out his boats to tow, and, cheering on his men through the fire from the fort, he brought the *Porcupine* to her station. As this was done at low water, he was enabled to pilot the ships and the transports successfully past the forts, and carry the troops to a landing-place.

By the middle of August we had 1,000 men in hospital, Wolfe himself being sick and confined to bed in his quarters; but his high spirits kept his determination unshaken, though he must have been getting very anxious, for the Canadian winter was now close at hand.

On August 5th Brigadier Murray was despatched up the river with 1,200 men in boats to embark in Holmes's ships, which were lying above the town. This manœuvre contributed to the final success, for Montcalm detached Bougainville with 1,500 men from the main force at Beauport, to watch Murray's movements. His troops, comfortably housed on

board the ships, were allowed to float up and down with the tide, while the French troops were much exhausted by the marching and countermarching.

Wolfe's feeble constitution began to succumb under all these disappointments and anxieties. Autumn was approaching and the admirals were anxious to be out of the river before the equinoctial gales set in. The success of the expedition began to appear more and more doubtful. Something had to be done at once. We need not here go into the question as to who was the author of the plan. Suffice it to say that an attack was determined upon.

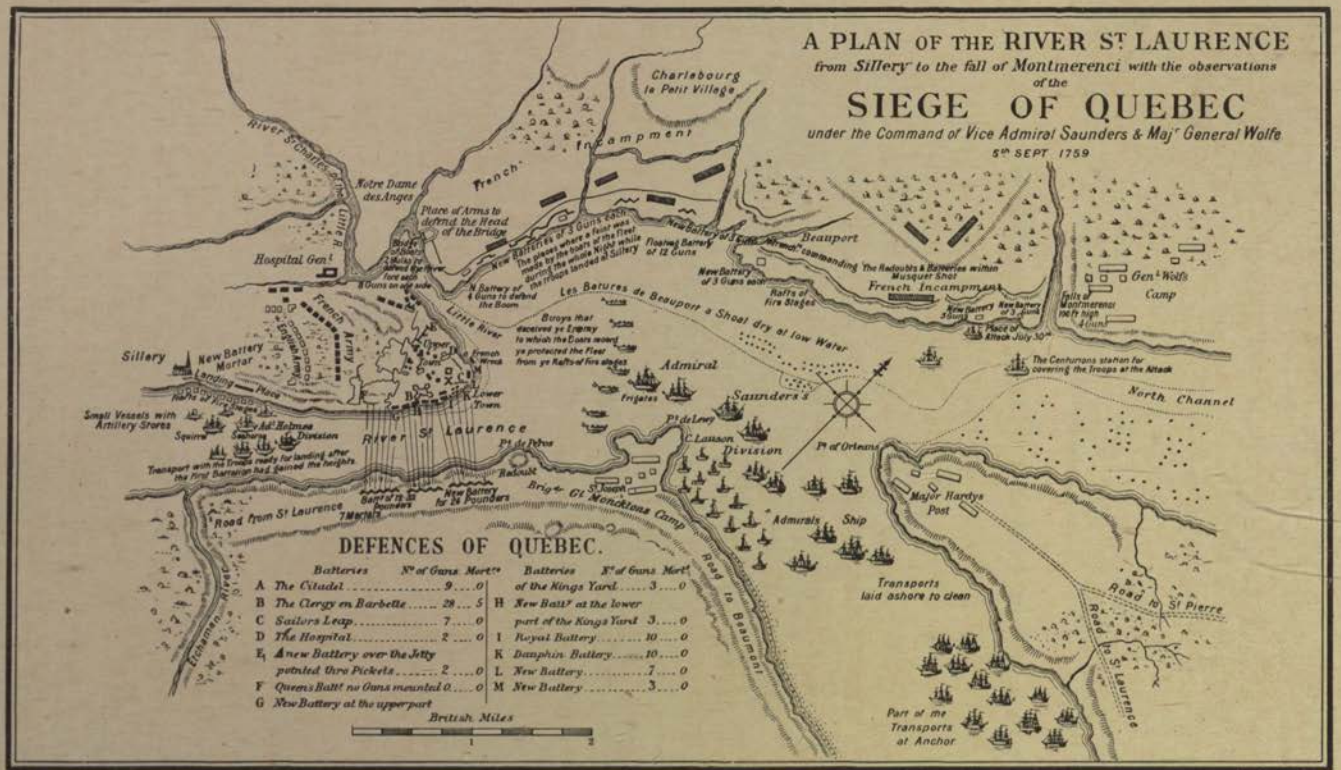
As the result of a conference of the brigadiers the camp at Montmorency was evacuated on August 29th, and all the troops that had been stationed there were conveyed to Point Levi. We read in a diary of that date, September 5th :

" Generals Monckton and Townshend marched at 2 p.m. with Amherst's regiment, Kennedy, and the Frazer Highlanders. They crossed the Etcherin River, and, a little above, lay our ships, with the troops that had gone up with Murray, and two battalions of Royal Americans on board. The boats embarked the troops, and the ships were very much crowded. Wolfe came from Point Levi an hour later, escorted by 100 Frazer Highlanders. On September 7th the ships moved up and anchored off Cape Rouge. On the 8th and 9th it rained hard.

On the 10th Wolfe, Townshend, Monckton, and Admiral Holmes went down the river to reconnoitre, and the result of their exploration was that Wolfe determined to get his army up on to the Plains of Abraham and to fight on that ground."

On September 11th, the night previous to the battle, after all the orders for the assault had been given, Wolfe sought an interview with Jervis, and told him he had the strongest presentiment that he should be killed in the fight of the morrow, but was sure that, if he did die, it would be on the field of victory. He then unbuttoned his waistcoat, and, taking from his breast a miniature of a young girl, he delivered it to Jervis, begging that, if the foreboding came true, he would return it to her with his own hands on his arrival in England. Jervis promised to do so, and on his return had the painful duty of delivering the pledge to Miss Lowther.

I need not here go into all the details of the battle of Abraham and the taking of Quebec, but will content myself with a recital of the main incidents. On the night of September 12th, Admiral Saunders moved the line-of-battle ships which were below Quebec towards the Beauport shore, anchoring as near the enemy's lines as the water would permit. The boats were then lowered, filled with seamen and marines, and drawn up in order, so as to make the enemy believe that we intended to effect a landing


A PLAN OF THE RIVER St LAURENCE
from Sillery to the fall of Montmerenci with the observations of the
SIEGE OF QUEBEC
under the Command of Vice Admiral Saunders & Majr General Wolfe
5th SEPT 1759
Charlesbourg le Petit Village
Incampment
River St Charles
Notre Dame des Anges
French
Place of Arms to defend the Head of the Bridge
New Batteries of 3 Guns each
Hospital Genl
Beauport
Floating Battery of 12 Guns
New Battery of 3 Guns each
French Incampment
Rafts of Fire Stages
Les Batures de Beauport a Shoal dry at low Water
Gen.l Wolfe's Camp
Little River
French Army
Sillery
New Battery Mortar
Landing Place
Buoys that escaved ye Enginy to which the Boats moord ye protected the Fleet from ye Rafts of fire stages
Admiral
Saunders's
Division
The Centurions station for covering the troops at the Attack
North Channel
Small Vessels with Artillery Stores
Adl Holmes Division
River St Laurence
Pt de Levy
Pt de Pohns
Pt of Orleans
C. Lauson
Transport with the troops ready for landing after the First Battalion had gained the heights
Redoubt
Brigr Gl Monckton's Camp
Road from St Laurence
Admirals Ship
Major Hardys Post
Transports laid ashore to clean
Road to St Pierre
Road to Beaumont
Part of the Transports at Anchor
DEFENCES OF QUEBEC.
British Miles

Batteries	Nº of Guns	Mortrs	Batteries	Nº of Guns	Mortrs
A The Citadel	9	0	H New Battr at the lower part of the Kings Yard	3	0
B The Clergy en Barbette	28	5	I Royal Battery	10	0
C Sailors Leap	7	0	K Bamphin Battery	10	0
D The Hospital	2	0	L New Battery	7	0
E A new Battery over the Jetty pointed thro Pickets	2	0	M New Battery	3	0
F Queens Battr no Guns mounted	0	0			
G New Battery at the upper part of the Kings Yard	3	0			

between Beauport and the mouth of the St. Charles. Wolfe's force above Quebec had embarked in the boats about 9 p.m., the night being starlit but moonless. The boats were laden with the troops, sitting between the seamen at their oars. At sundown Admiral Saunders began to bombard the town so as to keep up the deception of a threatened landing at Beauport. At 1 o'clock, as the tide was ebbing, Wolfe left the *Sunderland* and got into a boat; two lanterns, one above the other, were shown on board the *Sunderland*, this being the appointed signal, and the whole flotilla began to drift down-stream, the seamen hardly using their oars. The troops landed before daybreak, and, proceeding by a narrow and precipitous path, formed up on the Plains of Abraham. They had only been able to take one gun with them owing to the steepness of the path. Montcalm had been expecting an attack from Admiral Saunders's ships, which had been firing all night, and had increased their fire towards morning; but now he suddenly learnt that the enemy were already on the Plains of Abraham, having landed on the other side. As fast as he could get his troops across the river St. Charles he sent them to take up their positions to the west of the town. He had a force of 7,520 men, including Indians, with him, whereas Wolfe had only 4,828 under his command. Our infantry, with fine dis-

cipline and courage, stood the French fire without returning it, until the enemy was within forty yards, when they opened fire in turn, and the volleys completely shattered the French columns, which first wavered under their heavy loss, and then gave way, chased by our men, who advanced with bayonets fixed, cheering loudly. Wolfe was killed and General Monckton severely wounded, and General Townshend took command. On the French side Montcalm was mortally wounded and died two days later. We lost 500 men, and the French 2,500. Townshend had only just got his men into order when Bougainville's troops were seen approaching in the rear; but, on being confronted with two fresh regiments and the fire of some field-pieces (captured from the French), they retreated.

Guns were now got up from the fleet and the general entrenched himself. On September 17th a flag of truce arrived, and on the following day Quebec surrendered. In his report to Mr. Pitt, General Townshend says:

"I should be wanting in paying my due respects to the admirals of the naval service if I neglected this occasion to acknowledge how much we are indebted for our success to the constant assistance and support we have received, and to the perfect harmony and immediate correspondence which has prevailed throughout our operations in the uncommon difficulties which the nature of this country in

particular presents to military operations of a great extent, and which no army in itself can solely supply; the immense labour in transporting artillery, stores and provisions, the long watching and attending in boats, the drawing-up our artillery, even in the heat of action, it is my duty, though my command has been short, to acknowledge for that time, how great a share the Navy has had in this successful campaign."

General Murray was left in command at Quebec, and the fleet set sail for England. On his way home Admiral Saunders heard that the French fleet had at last made its way out of Brest, and started immediately to see if he could help Hawke, who was stationed there; but, finding the latter had already won his battle at Quiberon he continued on his course homewards.

While Saunders was scoring a victory in the West and Hawke was defeating the enemy in Quiberon Bay, Boscawen had been successful in the Mediterranean. England's command of the sea was thus, for the moment, complete.

Admiral Saunders was so pleased with the services rendered by Jervis that he appointed him to the command of the *Scorpion*, and sent him on ahead with news of the capture of Quebec. On his arrival in England the Admiralty confirmed his appointment to the *Scorpion*, and sent him to New York with important despatches for General Amherst.

When he left Spithead it was blowing a gale, and the sloop (an old leaky vessel, which shortly after foundered at sea) made so much water that he was obliged to put into Plymouth.

There, on his representing the importance of his orders to the port admiral, he was ordered to go on board the *Albany*, a sloop lying in the sound; and so urgently was his immediate departure pressed that it was with great difficulty that he obtained permission and time to take his own boat's crew out of the *Scorpion*.

Now it so happened that the *Albany* had been a long time in commission, and that considerable arrears of pay were due to her crew; moreover, they had been accustomed only to short cruises along the coast, as convoy, and they did not relish the idea of a long voyage across the Atlantic. As Commander Jervis stepped over the side, he promptly gave the order, "Up anchor!" The crew absolutely refused to obey, and, running on to the quarter-deck, loudly announced their intentions. But they little knew with whom they had to do. For Jervis, *seeing his duty*, proved now, for the first time—but by no means the last—that no power on earth would deter him from *accomplishing it*. Having first reasoned fruitlessly with the men, he ordered his boat's crew from the *Scorpion* to take hatchets and cut the cables, and then sent them aloft to loose the foresail. This was enough—the crew now saw

the sort of man they had to deal with. They submitted at once, gave no further trouble, and the *Albany* proceeded on her way. The ringleaders were severely punished, and from this moment in his career Jervis met the spirit of mutiny with an uncompromising and indomitable will; for he recognised it as something more dangerous, because more insidious, than an open enemy. Twenty-four days later the *Albany* delivered her despatches in New York, and, in accordance with his orders, Jervis prepared to return to England. He was anxious to get back without delay since Admiral Saunders, having been appointed Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean, wished Jervis to accompany him as his flag-captain. But this was not to be, for accounts were received from Governor Littleton that the Cherokee Creek Indians had made a dreadful irruption into South Carolina and that Charlestown, the capital, was in danger. General Amherst called upon Captain Jervis to assist him by conveying a body of troops thither, and, having performed this duty expeditiously, Jervis returned to England, but arrived too late to go out with Admiral Saunders, who had appointed another captain in his place.

During the summer of 1760 Jervis served under Admiral Rodney, off Havre de Grace. In the autumn he was appointed captain of the *Unicorn*, and in October 1760 was pro-

moted, as post-captain, to the *Gosport* (60), and employed in convoying the trade to and from the Baltic. In the spring of 1761 he was sent out to convoy the Virginian trade, and ordered to cruise for the protection of that part of the coast of America until the homeward trade was ready.

But on arrival at New York with money sent to pay the troops he heard from Sir Geoffrey Amherst that a descent had been made in Newfoundland by a body of French troops under the command of Comte de Hasraville, landed from a squadron under the command of the Chevalier de Tiernay, consisting of the *Robuste*, *Éveille*, *Garonne*, and *Licorne*. He was also informed by General Amherst that Lord Colville had taken up a defensive position in the *Northumberland* at the entrance of Halifax Harbour, and that Governor Graves had done the same at Placentia, in Newfoundland. He proceeded instantly to Halifax, and, being soon after reinforced by the *Massachusetts*, and a provincial armed ship, the *King George*, commanded by Captain Holloway, he took Lord Colville to Placentia; there he joined Governor Graves, and, proceeding off St. John's, Newfoundland, with the *Antelope* and *Syren*, cruised about until the arrival of General Amherst with a body of convalescents and provincial troops from New York. St. John's was then retaken, and the French garrison surrendered as prisoners of

war. The French squadron made its escape in a thick fog during the night. The *Gosport* then sailed to New York with part of the troops, and, hearing that the negotiations for peace were well advanced, Jervis landed the troops and set out for England. Before leaving, however, he received most handsome acknowledgments from General Amherst for the very great services he had rendered him. On his way home he took the charge of the largest convoy that was ever entrusted to a single ship.

On May 29th, 1762, the Duke of Newcastle resigned, and Lord Bute was appointed First Lord of the Treasury and head of the Administration. His Grace declined a pension, saying that, if he could no longer serve his country, he would not be a burden to it.

On November 3rd the preliminary articles of peace between England and France were signed by the Duke of Bedford at Fontainebleau. By this treaty we gained Canada from France and Florida from Spain. Our conquests in the East Indies were restored to France, but we retained Senegal in Africa and several West Indian islands.

Lord Bute's Government did not last long, however, for on April 8th, 1763, he resigned and was succeeded by Mr. George Grenville.

The *Gosport* paid off in this year 1763, and Captain Jervis did not serve again till 1769.

CHAPTER II

SERVICE AS CAPTAIN

1769—1774

"Then comes the time of labour, when, having become the best he can be, he does the best he can do."—RUSKIN.

CAPTAIN JERVIS was thirty-four years of age when he was appointed to the *Alarm*, a thirty-two-gun frigate, in February 1769. The first period of his life, that in which character is formed, was over. He was now a man who had proved himself armed at all points—well-educated, well-informed, strong, energetic, self-reliant to an extraordinary degree, and ready for all the hardships he might experience and the storms that were to break against him, only to be thrown back like the seas from the Eddystone Lighthouse, and, like it, planted on a rock, immovable, and a light to guide all and every one in the stirring times to come.

His commission in the *Alarm* was chiefly remarkable for the extraordinary evidence of resourcefulness and seamanship that he displayed in saving her from wreck, and in again getting her ready for service.

The instant repair of any damages to our ships, whether caused by storm or battle, was almost a mania with him. He could not bear that one of His Majesty's ships or vessels should ever be in difficulties or disabled without immediately being refitted by her own resources, and would acknowledge no difficulty as insurmountable. This it was that in later years kept our ships in the Mediterranean always ready and efficient for any duty that might be required of them.

After the *Alarm* reached the Mediterranean, she was employed in cruising and visiting the various ports, and in September 1769 she reached Genoa. On Sunday afternoon, being the day after her arrival, two Turkish slaves sauntered off from their galley near the Mole. Seeing the *Alarm's* boat, they jumped into the stern sheets and wrapped themselves up in the British colours, exclaiming, "We are free!" Hearing of this, the Genoese officer on duty ordered them to be forcibly taken from their refuge; and they were accordingly dragged out of the boat and sent back to their chains of bondage. It was found that one of them, in his struggles, had torn away a piece of the boat's pendant, and when his officer reported this to Captain Jervis, he at once decided that it was not only an insult to the British flag, but an outrageous enforcement of slavery, which he could by no means pass over, and that for each

of these injuries a distinct reparation was due, and must be made.

"Accordingly [to use his own language], I demanded of the Doge and Senate that both the slaves should be brought on board, with the part of the torn pendant, which the slave carried off with him, the officer of the guard punished, and an apology made on the quarter-deck of the *Alarm*, under the King's colours, for the outrage offered to the British nation. On the following Tuesday this was literally complied with; the offending officer came, degraded, and formally made his apology on the frigate's quarter-deck, before all her officers and ship's company, and the slaves also were brought on board, the one bringing with him the piece of torn colours, to which he had clung for protection, and they were restored to freedom. After all this was done [continued their liberator], I asked the slave who had wrapped the pendant round his body what were his sensations when the officer tore him from the pendant staff. His reply was that he felt no dread, for he knew that the touch of the royal colours gave him freedom."

But it would appear that the British Admiralty of that day did not encourage such vigorous support of freedom and of the honour of the national flag, for a short time afterwards we find Captain Jervis writing to his brother:

"I had an opportunity of carrying the British flag (in relation to two Turkish slaves) as high as Blake had ever done; for which I am *publicly* censured, though I hope we have too much virtue left for me not to be justified in *private*."

Yet, whatever the views taken by his Government of Jervis's methods of asserting the honour of his flag and liberty of the subject, the practical result was that for many years afterwards in the Barbary States if a slave could but touch the British colours (which all our boats carry in foreign ports), he was able to demand his release as a matter of right. For this reason it became the practice for the slaves to be kept chained so long as a British man-of-war remained in harbour.

The question has often been raised whether this conduct of Jervis, of which in later years he was wont to say he was "most proud," was consistent with his action in afterwards opposing the Abolition of Slavery in America in the House of Lords. Personally I think it was, for he was a very shrewd man, and his argument was, "Take care that you do not hand them over to worse masters!"

In March 1770 the *Alarm* was at anchor in the port of Marseilles when the equinoctials came on, and she had a narrow escape of being wrecked, as the following account extracted from her log will show.

"On Friday, March 30th, whilst moored in Marseilles Bay, we experienced strong gales from E.S.E. Our longboat was ashore watering. At seven p.m. we fired a gun for a pilot preparatory to going to sea. At eight the pilot came on board and we began to unmoor. The captain

went on shore to pay a visit to the Commandant of the Marine. The wind now shifted suddenly to N.N.W. and increased very much. The pilot ordered the yards and topmasts to be struck [evidently knowing what they were in for] and while everybody was employed he made his escape by the stern ladder into a small boat, and got on shore. At 9 p.m. the captain came off with great difficulty, there being a great swell from N.N.W."

The next morning strong gales were blowing, with squally weather, but towards noon there was a perfect hurricane, moderating towards the afternoon with hazy weather and strong gales, the ship rolling considerably. At 2 p.m. the wind increased again. The best bower-cable parted, and the sheet and the other bower-anchor were then let go, but failed to hold her. At length she got into the influence of the surge of the Tête de Mort, where she brought up and struck violently from the fore part of the mizzen-chains aft.

The masts were cut away and signal-guns of distress fired. The pumps were manned and all hands employed in clearing away the wreck, whilst the ship still continued to strike heavily. What a night it must have been ! As the main-mast went overboard it carried two of the boats away. At 3 a.m. the rudder bumped off and the cabin was destroyed from the blow of the tiller. Attempts were made to heave the ship off, but in vain. At daylight many of the

inhabitants came down to assist. They made several attempts to get a line ashore by veering buoys astern, but the return seas prevented it. As the ship was now making as much water as the pumps could keep under control, it was necessary to take some decided steps, and Joseph Smith, seaman, offered to attempt getting on shore with a line.

At 7 a.m. a small boat was launched with James Raside and Smith in her, and, although she soon filled and went to pieces, yet with the utmost intrepidity, and with the assistance of those on shore, the two men did their work, bending a hawser on to the end of a line, which the French hauled on shore and made fast tc a rock, thus steadying the ship clear of the reef, upon which she was beating.

At 8 p.m. Henry Wickens (the names of these men well deserve to be remembered) swam on shore with a message to the British Consul, and the three men came off again in the first boat.

All this time the pumps were kept going incessantly—a pint of wine being served out every six hours to each member of the ship's company. Thanks to their exertions, and to the help given by hired seamen from the shore, as well as to the great assistance rendered by M. Pléville de Peltier (the port officer), the ship was saved. Captain Jervis writes to his father:

"Do not be alarmed, my dear sir, at the

newspaper accounts which you will read of the *Alarm*. The interposition of Divine Providence has most miraculously preserved her. The same Providence will, I hope, give health and long life to my dear father, mother, and brother.

"J. JERVIS."

They had many days of wretched weather, but by great exertions the ship was moored in safety, and hove down, keel out of water, after having been stripped and emptied.

The damage done consisted of the total loss of the false keel and 28 feet of the main keel. All the gripe had gone, together with 8 feet of the stern-post and the whole of the dead-wood. No less than 22 ft. of the garboard-strake (that nearest the keel) were carried away; of the next strake 18 ft. were gone, of the third 14 ft., of the fourth 12 ft., and of the fifth 10 ft., while the sixth had entirely disappeared. The repairs were immediately taken in hand, and, in recognition of the valuable help given by M. de Peltier, the Admiralty presented him with a handsome piece of plate with a formal expression of their gratitude.

On April 12th, 1770, Captain Jervis writes to his father from Marseilles:

"I have the happiness to inform my dearest father that my prospects brighten, and I hope to be at sea in a month. I have had a severe lesson of submission to the Divine Will, gained some experience, and, I have the vanity to think,

lost no reputation, although other loss I have sustained enough, but that is not to be named. I feel for what my dearest parents must have suffered about their

"J. JERVIS."

On May 11th of the same year he writes:

"I have the happiness to acquaint my dear father that one side of the *Alarm* is completely repaired, and we are setting about the other. I have received the most satisfactory letters from the Admiralty, public and private; a glorious action in the midst of a war could not be more applauded than the gallantry of the officers and crew for theirs; and the board is so good as to provide for the men I have pointed out, as having distinguished themselves most.

"J. JERVIS."

In writing to his sister he says:

"Thanks, my dear sister, for your cordial of a letter. The only vacancy I felt, in the most arduous task I ever yet saw, was the want of your remembrance. I have it now, and am happy, but worn down to the merest skeleton you ever saw.

"J. JERVIS."

The economy with which the ship was repaired (one might almost say rebuilt) was characteristic of the man, for economy in the services of the State was always one of his first cares. A sum of £1,415 covered all the expenses for the complete refit and for housing his men on shore for three months. To show what splendid

discipline he maintained and how little discontent this discipline produced, during the whole of this time there were no more than six punishments—in spite of the men being on shore with every temptation to drink—and, though the captain had to complain to the British Minister in Paris of constant attempts to induce his men to desert, he lost not a single man.

In July Jervis writes to his sister:

"The *Alarm* is the completest thing I ever saw on the water, insomuch that I have almost forgotten that she was the other day in the opinion of most—her officers and crew not excepted—a miserable, sunken wreck. Happily for my reputation, my health happened to be equal to the task or I had been lost for ever, instead of receiving continual marks of public and private approbation of my conduct; but this is *entre nous*. I never speak or write upon the subject except to those I love most. You will easily believe Barrington is one. His goodness to me is romantic."

Captain Barrington was an officer of considerable reputation and long standing in the service, and to the end of their lives, was, among men, his dearest friend.

It is pleasant to read Jervis's letters to his favourite sister, Mrs. Rickets, in which he unbosoms himself and allows one to catch those glimpses of his warmer nature which, later on, in times of stress and opposition, become more rare. Mrs. Rickets was a woman of great talent

and strong affections, and he confided to her his inmost thoughts. He tells her of an attachment which, though it had now obtained entire possession of his thoughts, he was obliged to conceal till some years later. Mentioning Miss Parker (whom he afterwards married), he writes:

"Your sentiments are exactly conformable to my own, founded on long observation, not blinded by passion, and but for the insurmountable objects I before mentioned, I should on the first opportunity make the most unreserved proposals to her, but, situated as matters now are, the most distant hint cannot be given, lest it should tend to prevent some much better match she has just reason to expect, or embarrass her in other sort, neither of which are consistent with the value I have for her."

The *Alarm* now proceeded to Leghorn, where Jervis was requested to show civility to the Duc de Chablais. With regard to this he writes:

"H.R.H. made handsome presents to most of the officers, which affords me more pleasure than if the attention had been conferred on me."

In the spring of 1771 the *Alarm* arrived at Spithead, and Jervis was able to spend a short time with his family—a most welcome holiday.

Jervis's reputation was rising in the estimation of the Government, and when Prince Henry (Duke of Gloucester) was ordered abroad for his health and the King wished for a frigate to take him out, the *Alarm* was chosen for this

service—Jervis's courtliness of manner and efficiency as a seaman being the reasons why he was chosen to attend His Highness to the Italian courts.

His mission lasted from the end of the year till June 1772, and during that time he learnt a great deal about people and courts, made many friends, and was also able to acquire much useful professional knowledge. He was always interested in the study of his fellow-men, and keen on gaining any information which might stand him in good stead later on; but, apart from this, a certain amount of diplomatic knowledge is very necessary for an officer who may have to take command in the Mediterranean, and this time was not wasted in his case.

The Duke of Gloucester quitted the ship in May full of gratitude for the pleasant time he had spent on board, and the *Alarm* proceeded to Marseilles to present M. de Peltier with the plate awarded him by the Government in recognition of his services.

In June 1772 the frigate was paid off.

Jervis, who was never idle, finding that he was likely to be a long time on half-pay, considered that now was his opportunity to gain all the accomplishments and knowledge from which a life at sea had hitherto debarred him. "Time is the stuff that life is made of," as Benjamin Franklin said. He therefore determined to inform himself accurately in regard to the naval

resources, the navigation, and pilotage of the coasts and harbours of the countries that he was most likely to have to deal with. In order the better to accomplish this, he started to learn French thoroughly with the intention of joining his friend Barrington, with whom he had arranged to visit the European naval arsenals during the following summer. Accordingly he went to France, put up at a *pension*, and studied so hard that he almost ruined his health.

His mother and brother entreated him to desist, but he wrote:

"Though I should not succeed according to my sanguine wishes and expectations, it will always be useful to have a general idea of this prevalent language, and a knowledge of the country we have so long contended with, and must ever be our rival in arms and commerce till we fall. I hope and believe that period is very distant, but summer approaches so fast that I should be loath to give up what I have been at so much pains and inconvenience to acquire."

Shortly after this (in 1772) he wrote to his sister:

"At first, by too close application, my health suffered to that degree that I was obliged to shake off every idea of French, and remain in a state of almost non-reflection for a month; but I am now quite well; I begin to take up the language at my ease, and intend paying off my master."

He then visited Paris and all the principal manufacturing towns of France. He complains, in his letters to his sister, of the Frenchmen of that day, of their unmanly vices, their trifling folly and dissipations; nor was he much better pleased with his own countrymen, of what would now be designated the globe-trotter class.

"Flocks pass me daily, posthaste after the bubble Pleasure. The further they travel, the greater distance they find themselves from it."

Having acquired an adequate knowledge of French, Captain Jervis returned to England in November 1772, and in the following summer he went with his friend Barrington to St. Petersburg.

They sailed from London in a merchant trader and reached Cronstadt in August. In a journal kept by him, Jervis made notes on all occasions of anything likely to be useful to him. These show a shrewd perception of the characteristics of the people he met on his travels, and a keen eye for details calculated to be of value to him in his profession. For instance, he remarks that, "The Castle of Cronanburg, which guards the entrance into the Sound, may be overlooked by a line-of-battle ship, which may anchor in good ground as near the beach as she chooses."

He notes that there are two channels leading to Copenhagen—"the first, called the Royal, on

the starboard side of the first, or northern buoy," and that " in the northern channel where Fasterboon Church bears N.E. by E. you may haul up to E.S.E. or higher if you wish, but should keep your lead going." Nowadays, of course, the charts and sailing directions give all this information to the navigator, but it must be remembered that at that time charts were few and not always correct. These details were therefore most valuable, for afterwards it frequently turned out that, in giving his orders, Jervis relied on knowledge of the locality possessed by himself alone.

Captain Jervis spent a month in St. Petersburg at a period when the Empress Catherine, that strange compound of administrative genius and repulsive morals, wide intellectual sympathies and barbaric habits, was at the zenith of her power, displaying, both as a ruler at home and a conqueror abroad, an energy and an ambitious patriotism worthy of the successor of the great Peter; in libertinism she outrivalled her models the French, while she showed a love for learning and science far in advance of the general civilisation of the country in which she lived, and a scepticism which fully equalled that of her correspondent Voltaire. The sway of Count Gregory Orloff, if indeed the influence exercised by any of her favourites amounted to sway, was on the wane, and he had been appointed to a place at some distance off to make room for Potemkin.

They were both in St. Petersburg at the time of Jervis's visit, as were also the scientist Stehlin, the warrior Romanzoff and the dashing young Rapnin. Shortly after he arrived he went to hear the *Te Deum*, chanted with all the splendour which the pageantry of that day could give, to celebrate the glorious peace which Catherine had just concluded with Turkey. This was followed by a Levée, which Jervis also attended.

He tells us that at the thanksgiving service—

"Catherine mingled her salutations to the Saints and to the people, showing her decent compliance with religious ceremonials and her attention to her soldiers and foreign ambassadors; but she showed no devotion.

"During the sermon she took occasion to nod and smile to those she intended to gratify, and surely no sovereign ever possessed the power of pleasing all around her as she did. She was dressed in the Guards' uniform—a scarlet pelisse, and a green silk robe, lapelled from top to bottom—her hair combed neatly and boxed *en militaire* with a small cap and a casket of diamonds in front, a blue ribbon, and the order of St. Andrew on her right shoulder."

Jervis remarks freely in his journal on the appearance of the men and women he saw. He thoroughly inspected St. Petersburg (or, at any rate, as thoroughly as the facilities granted to him would allow) noting down a host of details in regard to its military forces, the capabilities of the Naval Arsenal, the docks and shipping,

their contents, the number and force of the line-of-battle ships, whether in commission, built, or building, their age, or progress toward completion; all these things are set down with the minutest care. He comments on and criticises the Russian methods of ship-building, noting the scamped work.

After leaving St. Petersburg Jervis visited Stockholm, Christiania, and Copenhagen, making the same careful study of naval and social conditions in each of these capitals. He gives the following description of the prisons at Copenhagen:

"The Repository for slaves is loathsome to a degree; they are most of them deserters, some loaded with irons, according to their offences. Those who had a second time deserted were chained to a wheelbarrow, each hand to a handle, which became their working companion by day and their sleeping-place at night—death alone separating them.

"Oh! my soul sickened at this scene of despotism."

From Copenhagen he passed through Lubeck and Hamburg and thence to Holland, making a similar inspection of all her naval and commercial towns, and thence home to England.

The following year the two friends renewed their tour of inspection, and the ports on the western coasts of France engaged their attention.

With Havre Jervis was already acquainted,

and, as Cherbourg had not yet risen into importance, they first steered in a private yacht for Camoret Bay, and surveyed the roadsteads and creeks of Brest. They next visited Ports Louis and L'Orient, and, in order to gain a knowledge of the pilotage, coasted through Quiberon Bay, and thence up to Bordeaux and Rochefort, making notes and memoranda of the northern ports. At the close of the autumn they returned to Plymouth. Jervis had only his half-pay to cover all his expenses on these journeys. "To be sure," he admitted in after-years, "we sometimes did fare rather roughly, but what signifies that now? *My object was attained.*"

CHAPTER III

EFFICIENCY AND HONOURS

1775—1782

"Weak things grow strong by unity and love,
By discord strong things weak and weaker prove."
Inscription.

In June 1775 Captain Jervis was appointed to the *Kent*, but she was paid off in the following August, and on September 1st of the same year he hoisted his pendant in the *Foudroyant* (84)—a fine ship, which had been captured from the French in 1758—and continued to serve in her on the home station until she paid off in 1782.

After being nearly three years in commission, he found himself, in July 1778, under Admiral the Honourable A. Keppel.

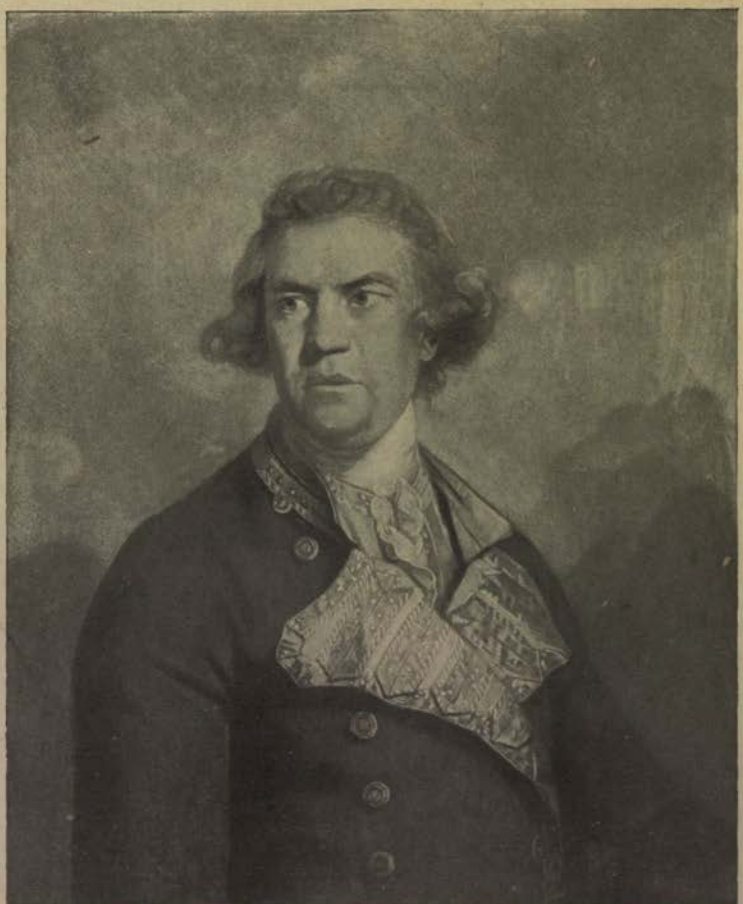
The year 1778 was memorable as one in which the struggle of the American Colonies for independence entered upon its final phase, and also for the rupture of our relations with France and Spain.

On April 7th the Duke of Richmond moved an address to the King, supported by the whole of the Rockingham party, recommending

the recognition of the Independence of the American Colonies. It was in the course of this debate that there occurred that memorable scene when the great Lord Chatham came to the House from his retirement. Dressed in a rich suit of black velvet, with a full wig, and wrapped in flannel to the knees, supported on one side by his son, the younger Pitt, and on the other by his son-in-law, Lord Mahon, and resting on his crutches, he at first spoke with difficulty—but as he grew warm his voice rose, and was as harmonious as ever. "My Lords," he said, "I rejoice that the grave has not closed on me, that I am still alive, to lift up my voice against the dismemberment of this most ancient and most noble monarchy." This speech was his last, for, little more than a month later, he died and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

On March 10th the French Ambassador left London, having notified the English Government that France had acknowledged the independence of the United States and had made a defensive treaty with them. England at once recalled her Ambassador, although the King of Spain attempted to mediate.

On June 12th, 1778, Admiral Keppel left Plymouth with twenty sail of the line and was joined later by two more. He was burdened with an immense responsibility, for war had not yet been proclaimed between France and England, and, as Commander-in-Chief of the



VICE-ADMIRAL THE HON. A. KEPPEL.

From a print lent by Messrs. T. H. Parker, printsellers, 45, Whitcomb St., London.

Channel Fleet, he had unlimited discretionary power of action given to him by a Government which would not have hesitated to disavow him if things had gone wrong. He fell in with some French cruisers which had evidently been sent to watch his movements. Keppel hoisted the signal for a general chase. The *Licorne*, being overtaken by the *Hector* (74), fired a broadside into her and then hauled down her flag. The *Belle Poule*, Captain La Clochetterie, was overhauled by the *Arethusa*, Captain Samuel Marshall, which summoned her to surrender. This she refused to do, and a smart action ensued. The rigging of the *Arethusa* was cut to pieces and the *Belle Poule* was so badly damaged in her hull, and had so many of her crew killed and wounded, that she only got away with difficulty, when more British ships came up and took the *Arethusa* in tow.

Two other French frigates were seized and detained. This action may be said to have opened the war. Keppel now discovered that there were thirty-two ships of the line, and some ten frigates, under Admiral the Comte d'Orvilliers, in the harbour of Brest. The British fleet numbered only twenty sail of the line and three frigates—to so low a state had the Admiralty under Lord Sandwich's Administration allowed our Navy to sink. Keppel sailed back to St. Helens to collect more ships. He declared that he never felt so deep a melan-

choly as when he found himself obliged to turn his back on France. A fortnight afterwards, on July 9th, he was at sea again with thirty ships of the line and six frigates. The van was commanded by Vice-Admiral Sir Robert Harland, Rear-Admiral Campbell was in charge of the centre, and Vice-Admiral Palliser brought up the rear, whilst Jervis, in the *Foudroyant* (84), was next astern of Keppel.

D'Orvilliers had had two sets of instructions given to him: one of these was to fight, and the other to avoid an action if possible.

On July 23rd the fleets sighted one another. The British fleet consisted, as I have said, of thirty ships and six frigates, while the French had thirty-two ships and fourteen frigates, the French vessels being larger than the British ships of the same class. Ushant bore W.N.W. eighty miles, and lay to leeward of the French, while the British fleet was between them and the land. D'Orvilliers had no intention of fighting except on his own terms. For four days thick, unsettled weather prevailed, and the opponents were hidden from one another. During this time two of the French ships, the *Burgoyne* (80) and the *Alexandre* (64), lost their fleet and returned to Brest. At 9 a.m. on July 27th the French were sighted eight miles to the S.W. They were on the port tack, heading W.N.W. with a steady breeze at S.W. The English

rear had fallen to leeward, and Keppel made repeated signals to them to chase to windward, so as the better to support the main body if it could get into action. D'Orvilliers, observing this movement, expected an attack on his rear. Accordingly he wore his fleet in succession, and, by so doing, retained his position to leeward. The wind then hauled to the southward, in favour of our fleet, so Keppel stood on and tacked in the wake of the French. Then the wind shifted again, and hauled back to the westward, so the French wore together to prevent Keppel from concentrating on their rear division. The two fleets then passed one another on opposite tacks, exchanging broadsides. The French gunners seem to have done more execution than ours did, their guns being manned by artillerymen who had had constant training in peace time. They hulled many of our ships at the water-line as they heeled over to leeward, and at the same time inflicted heavy damage aloft to the sails and rigging. As the two lines began to pass clear of one another D'Orvilliers ordered his van (commanded by the Duc de Chartres) to turn and engage Keppel's rear-division on the leeside, intending to turn his rear and centre at the same time and thus place Sir Hugh Palliser between two fires. But he was not obeyed, and, finding that he could not carry out his plan, he ran down to leeward and formed his fleet on the starboard

tack, heading to the east, in the same direction as the British. Admiral Keppel then attempted the same manœuvre, but so many of his ships had been severely crippled, in hull and rigging, that the order could not be carried into effect. The van and centre, which had suffered less injury than the rear, were now nearer the French. By 4 p.m. the fleet having repaired damages, Keppel ordered his ships to re-form line and renew the battle. Harland responded with alacrity, but Palliser, in the *Formidable*, gave no indication of having seen the signal. After waiting for an hour, Keppel sent a frigate to him, with an order to bring his division into action without a moment's delay. No notice was taken of his urgent message, and Keppel then signalled to the captains to leave the *Formidable* and take up their posts in line. Unfortunately, darkness now came on. D'Orvilliers left two fast sail behind him, to show lights, in order to deceive the British and hide his retreat, and steered for Brest, where he arrived on July 29th. The next morning only three French ships could be seen from the deck of the flagship. Keppel therefore made up his mind to return to Plymouth, and dropped anchor there on July 31st.

The British had 133 men killed and 375 wounded, and the French 163 killed and 579 wounded. No ship was either taken or sunk. Nevertheless, out of this indecisive action arose a

most lamentable political quarrel. A malicious paragraph in a news-sheet accused Sir Hugh Palliser of not obeying the signal of his Commander-in-Chief. Palliser requested Keppel to contradict this, but he declined to do so. The matter ended by Sir Hugh demanding a court-martial on his chief, and this the Admiralty imprudently granted. The dispute then degenerated into a party question. Public and naval opinion was in favour of Keppel; but Palliser also had his supporters. Captain Jervis greatly distinguished himself in the action, and was also an important witness at the court-martial.[1]

I give here one or two of the questions put to him and his answers thereto:

Question (put by Admiral Keppel).—Your station being nearest to me, during the pursuit of the enemy, and after the action—which gave you an opportunity of observing my conduct, and of seeing objects nearly in the same point of view as myself—I desire you will acquaint the Court of any instance, if you saw and know of any such, in which I negligently performed any part of my duty on the 27th and 28th July.

Answer (by Capt. Jervis).—With great respect to you, and great deference to the Court, I hope I shall be indulged by that question being put by the Court.

The question being put, he answered as follows:

[1] For an account of the whole of this sad affair see *George III and Charles Fox* by Trevelyan, pp. 155, etc.

A.— I feel myself bound by the oath I have taken to answer that question—I believe it to be consonant to the practice of sea courts-martial. I cannot boast a long acquaintance with Admiral Keppel. I never had the honour to serve under him before; but I am happy in this opportunity to declare to this Court, and to the whole world, that during the whole time the English fleet was in sight of the French fleet he displayed the greatest naval skill and ability, and the boldest enterprise, on the 27th July, which, with the promptitude and obedience of Admiral Sir Robert Harland, will be subjects of my admiration and of my imitation as long as I live.

Being desired to look at the log and inform the Court how the wind shifted, etc., he glanced at the log, observing he did not suppose much stress would be laid on a shift of wind while in action, and was making some other observations when the Court asked:

Q.—You speak here upon your oath, from your own knowledge?

A.—Yes, I have nothing to do with the log-book. I speak not from that, or from any minutes; I govern myself by the effect of the wind upon the ship, and not the point itself. I cannot speak to any point, nor will I. I do not speak to the point of the wind or compass, at this distance of time. I do not refresh my memory by log-books, or any other minutes, for I have looked at none. I pay no regard whatever to it, though I would not have a log-book under me altered upon any consideration

upon earth.[1] Yet I do not pay much faith to a log-book, taken at such a time, because, where officers are attentive to an enemy, and to the Commander-in-Chief, they do not put down very shift of wind, except accurate persons are appointed for that purpose alone.

Q.—Did you ever know or hear of a British fleet turning their sterns upon an enemy of equal or inferior force, that enemy standing towards them, immediately after having engaged them?

A.—I deny the fact, in all its extent and meaning.

On January 17th, 1781, popular feeling ran so strongly against Sir Hugh Palliser that he resigned his seat in the Commons, and all his public employments, to the amount of £4,000 a year, while Admiral Keppel received the thanks of both Houses for having "gloriously upheld the honour of the British flag." So unfortunate is it when politics are allowed to interfere in the service of the State.

Captain Jervis's letter to George Jackson (second Secretary of the Admiralty) is well worth quoting here, as the testimony of a singularly independent and clear-minded eye-witness.[2]

"My dear Jackson,

"I do not agree that we have been outwitted. The French, I am convinced, never would have fought us if they had not been surprised into it by a sudden shift of wind,

[1] N.B.—A reference to the fact that Captain Hood (afterwards Lord Bridport) had altered his log-book.

[2] Brenton's *Life of Earl St. Vincent.*

and when they formed their inimitable line, after our brush, it was merely to cover their intention of flight. Four of our ships having got themselves to leeward (so far as to be cut off by the enemy if Admiral Keppel had not judiciously bore down to them) and the shattered state of Sir Hugh's ship, which disabled him from taking his place in the line, rendered it impossible to renew the attack on the evening of the 27th. I have often told you that two fleets of equal force can never produce decisive events, unless *they are equally determined to fight it out*; or the Commander-in-Chief of one of them misconducts his line. I perceive it is the fashion of people to puff themselves, and no doubt you have seen, or will see, some of these accounts.

"For my part, I forbade the officers to write by the frigate, that carried the despatches. I did not write a syllable myself, except touching my health—nor shall I, but to state the intrepidity of the officers and people under my command (through the most infernal fire I ever saw, or heard) to Lord Sandwich, in which particular mention is made of young Wells. In justice to the *Foudroyant*, I must observe to you that, though she received the fire of seventeen sail and had the *Bretagne*, the *Ville de Paris* and a 74, upon her, at the same time, and appeared more disabled in her masts and rigging than any other ship, she was the first in the line of battle, and really and truly better fitted for business in essentials (because her people were cool) than when she began.

"N.B.—Keep this to yourself, unless you hear too much said in praise of others.

"Yours,

"J. J."

In another letter to Jackson he says:

"It certainly was intended by Admiral Keppel to renew the attack in the evening of the 27th, and he sent a message by a frigate to that effect: 'Tell the Vice of the Blue I only wait for his division to renew the attack.' Neither the message, nor the signal, was obeyed in any degree. It was too late; the *Formidable* did not (in view) bear down at all. I conclude she was so disabled—she *could not*. In that event ought not the flag to have been shifted?

"J. JERVIS."

The chief parties to the War of 1778 were, on the one hand, Great Britain, on the other the House of Bourbon controlling the Kingdoms of France and Spain. The American Colonies, engaged in an unequal struggle with the mother-country, welcomed it as an event likely to tell in their favour. Happily, their lack of sea-power (with the exception of a few cruisers that preyed upon our commerce) prevented them from taking any active part in the quarrel. Nevertheless, the necessity for carrying on this distant land-warfare was at once a powerful diversion in favour of the allies and an exhausting drain upon the resources of Great Britain. Gibraltar was also a heavy weight upon the English, who were perpetually called upon to relieve it, whilst that gallant soldier, General Eliott, held doggedly to its defence. But, seeing that the French and Spaniards, who, when united, were much superior in force to the English, were

obliged, from time to time, to return to their respective headquarters at Brest and Cadiz, it is surprising that the English fleet did not remain outside Brest, ready to defeat either squadron separately before they could join forces. At this time our fleets were engaged at a great many points in various parts of the world. Sir Edward Hughes and Suffren, both brilliant commanders, were busily engaged in India, while Rodney and Hood were dealing with De Grasse in the West Indies, and a defeat of the allies at sea would have relieved the pressure at all these points, as well as in America.

The principal event in the year 1779 had been the commencement of hostilities between Prussia and Austria, which originated in the revival of some obsolete claim of Austria to the succession of the Bavarian Estates, now that the Guillelmine line was extinct by the death of the Elector Joseph Maximilian. Prussia resisted this pretension. After many marches and countermarches, both combatants withdrew from the field without having sustained any material loss other than from sickness and desertion.

Captain Jervis was still serving in the *Foudroyant*; at first his ship bore Lord Shouldham's flag, but soon afterwards, in June 1779, he sailed in the fleet under Sir Charles Hardy, taking the place of second ship of the line, or immediately astern of his chief. The united fleets of France and Spain, consisting of sixty-

six ships of the line and fourteen frigates, had assembled off Corunna, intending to sweep the seas of all English ships, to obtain mastery of the Channel, and to attack the coasts of England and Ireland. Sir Charles Hardy, formerly Governor of Greenwich Hospital, an old but distinguished admiral, who had seen much service, was in command of thirty-five ships, which had been collected together from every available quarter. The enemy, having spent five days arranging a code of signals between the ships of the two nations, steered northward on July 30th and cruised off Brest for a time, discussing plans with the Ministry at Versailles. At length they entered the English Channel and made their appearance off Plymouth. Sir Charles Hardy had missed them, and they had not seen him. When, therefore, the red flag was hoisted on Maker Church, to show that an enemy was in sight, the whole town of Plymouth and the country round was in great alarm.

The town was full of French prisoners, who became dangerously excited when they heard the guns of an attacking fleet. The gunners of the forts were short of cartridges, their supply having been drawn upon for the ships, and only 4,000 men could be found to man the fortifications. Fortunately, the enemy lacked enterprise. Comte d'Orvilliers and Don Luis de Cordova paced the decks of their ships pon-

dering what action they should take, and ended by adopting the Spanish policy of "Mañana!" But wind and tide wait for no one; and, by delaying too long, they lost their opportunity. They might have attacked on Monday, but on Wednesday, August 18th, an easterly gale drove them out of the Channel, and so strong did it blow that they were carried 150 miles to the west of the Lizard. By the time the storm had expended its fury, the combined fleets found themselves close to the British admiral and his ships. Sir Charles Hardy decided, in view of the great numerical superiority of the enemy and the exposed state of the coasts of Britain, that his best policy would be to elude them and avoid an action, which, if he received much damage, would leave the coasts defenceless. Accordingly he picked up Jervis and his consorts and retreated to Spithead. His arrival there was hailed with almost as much joy as if he had gained a victory. The Admiralty, under Lord Howe, considered that, in the circumstances, he had done right to retreat, but Jervis was much distressed about it, for he wrote in a letter to his sister:

"I am in the most humbled state of mind I ever experienced from the retreat we have made, before the combined fleets, yesterday and this morning."

The fleet anchored at Spithead on September

3rd, and on the following day Lord Sandwich was despatched to Portsmouth by the King with peremptory injunctions to inform the admiral by word of mouth that "His Majesty expected that the enemy would not be permitted to leave the Channel without feeling the chastisement which so base a conduct deserved." Jervis was the foremost among those who were strongly in favour of forcing a battle. Great confidence was expressed by all in the splendid set of captains then in command of the British ships, most of them being men who had served under Saunders and Hawke. Meanwhile, Sir Charles Hardy had received considerable reinforcements; but, by the time his fleet got to sea, the allies had dispersed. D'Orvilliers' squadron had been attacked by smallpox, some 500 or more of his men being incapacitated by this dreadful scourge, while large numbers had died in most of the French ships. The French commander had also discovered that the Spaniards were of little value, for he wrote:

"Our allies are brave and loyal, but what I see of their seamanship confirms me more than ever in the opinion that they have no claim to the title of good naval officers."

D'Orvilliers lost his son, a naval lieutenant, who died of putrid fever on board De Guichen's ship. This seems to have broken his heart, for he retired into obscurity, and from henceforth we

hear of him no more. Thus sickness and disease, once more, proved themselves more terrible in their results than any actual losses in battle.

During the years 1780–81 the *Foudroyant* was still in the Channel Fleet, under Admirals Geary and Derby, who during that time, save on one occasion, scarcely ever proceeded out of soundings.

The year 1781 was marked by great movements of the combined fleets of France and Spain, but none of these led to results of any consequence.

On June 23rd De Guichen sailed from Brest, with eighteen ships of the line, for Cadiz, and there joined thirty Spanish ships. This immense fleet sailed for the Mediterranean on July 22nd, landed 14,000 troops at Minorca, and then proceeding out of the Straits, again moved northward to threaten the Channel. Most of our attention was now centred in Gibraltar, which had had no supplies since its relief by Rodney during the previous year. A great fleet of twenty-eight ships of the line, under Admiral Derby, sailed from Portsmouth on March 13th, convoying 300 merchant-ships to the East and West Indies, and ninety-seven transports with troops for Gibraltar. They narrowly missed falling in with De Grasse, who came out from Brest with twenty-six sail on March 22nd. They passed Cadiz, where the Spaniards were at anchor, threw in supplies to Gibraltar on April 12th, and re-

turned to England in May. When the fleet before mentioned appeared in the Channel fifty strong Admiral Derby fell back upon Torbay. Owing partly to the differences of opinion which arose between its leaders, but mainly to the Spaniards' reluctance to attack, the combined Bourbon fleet retired. Gibraltar had been relieved, and England had not been attacked.

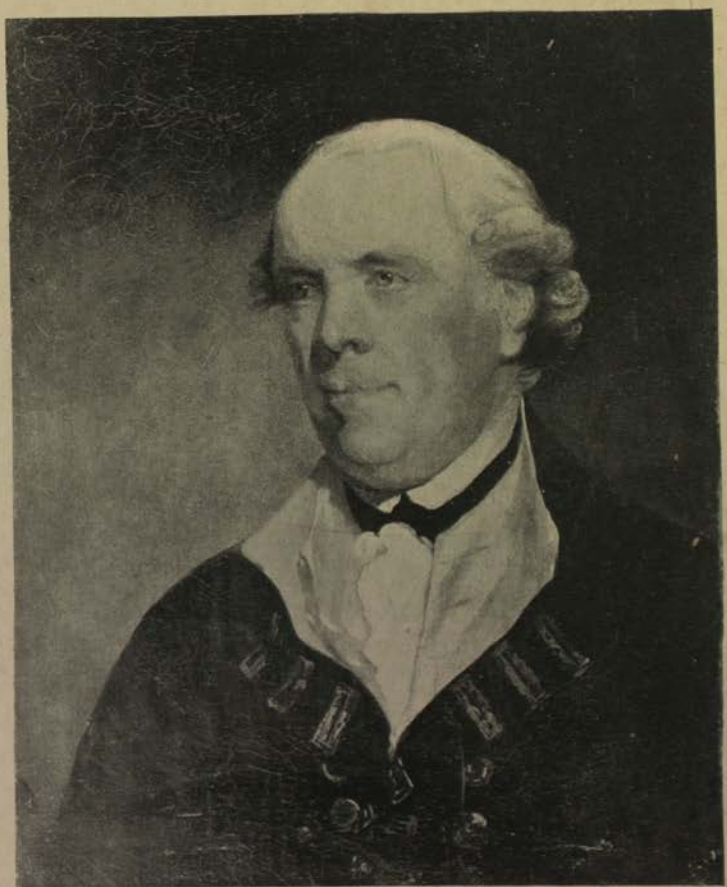
The year 1782 opened with the loss to the English of Port Mahon, which surrendered on February 5th, after a siege of six months.

On March 17th, 1782, Lord North informed the House that His Majesty had determined to make an entire change of administration. The Marquis of Rockingham was appointed First Lord of the Treasury, the Earl of Shelburne and Mr. Fox secretaries of State, and amongst other appointments Admiral Viscount Keppel took Lord Sandwich's place as First Lord of the Admiralty; while Colonel Barré, with whom Jervis had become friendly at Quebec, was appointed Treasurer of the Navy. During this year it was the intention of the Bourbon allies to collect a force of sixty sail of the line and sweep the coasts of Europe from the Straits of Gibraltar to the Baltic. It was expected that this force would be further increased by the Dutch ships—England having now deliberately forced Holland into a conflict in which she had little to gain and much to lose—but a squadron under Lord Howe drove these latter back into their ports.

As the Home Fleet was not yet quite prepared, Admiral Barrington sailed from Portsmouth on April 13th, with such vessels as were ready, consisting of twelve sail of the line. When he got a little to the south-west of Ushant, a signal was made by Captain Macbride, of the frigate *Artois*, that an enemy's fleet was in sight. The *Artois* was so far ahead that, although it was about noon, it was with the utmost difficulty that the admiral could discover (from the flag which she hoisted) of what nationality the hostile ships were. At this moment the *Foudroyant* was in her station (in the order of sailing) her captain having just returned from the flagship, where he had been conferring with the admiral. The signal having been made for a "general chase," the *Foudroyant*, owing to her superior sailing qualities, reached a long way ahead of the other ships of the fleet, and by evening she had made out the enemy to be six French ships of war and eighteen sail of convoy.

All the rest of the British fleet, being then a long way astern, soon after fell out of sight, and remained so during the next day.

At 10 p.m. the French ships of war separated, and Captain Jervis selected the largest of them for pursuit. Mr. Richard Bowen, one of his midshipmen, who was acting as his aide-de-camp, had the duty of keeping sight of the chase with his glass whilst the captain prepared his ship for battle; and, with all sail crowded on her, and



ADMIRAL BARRINGTON.

the wind increasing, this manœuvre required all his attention, good seaman though he was.

Jervis hailed Bowen and asked: "Do you see the enemy distinctly?" On his replying in the affirmative, Jervis replied: "That's right, Bowen; do you only keep sight of her, and, rely upon it, I will never lose sight of you." [1]

At midnight the *Foudroyant* was close up to the chase, which was now clearly distinguishable as a ship of the line.

The enemy was on the weather-bow of the *Foudroyant*, both ships going eleven knots, with the wind on the starboard quarter. When they were nearly within hail, the officer of the forecastle cried out, "She has put her helm up to rake us, sir." At first Jervis was going to put his helm to starboard and give the enemy his starboard broadside, but his aide-de-camp (now by his side) could not help exclaiming, "If we put our helm to port we shall rake her, sir." "You are right, Bowen," said Jervis, and he put his helm to port, raking her with the port guns. This little incident, recorded by himself, shows how, all through his life, Jervis was ready

[1] A promise faithfully kept. At the close of the year, during the relief of Gibraltar, Bowen was, at Jervis's request, made acting-lieutenant of the *Foudroyant* and afterwards joined Sir John Jervis's flag in the *Prince*, being confirmed as lieutenant in 1790. In 1792 he was again with his patron in the West Indies, and the following year was made Commander. In 1794 he became post-captain of the *Terpsichore*, and, after frequently distinguishing himself in that ship, he gallantly fell at Teneriffe. Rapid promotion and a glorious career!

to listen to any man who seemed keen and intelligent, and, while reserving his own judgment if he took the advice offered him, never failed to give the credit where it was due.

As the French ship hauled up Captain Jervis clewed up his mainsail, took in studding-sails, and, passing close under her stern, continued to rake her. The carnage which ensued seems to have quite disconcerted the enemy, for she then ran before the wind, all her sails in confusion. This determined Jervis to board her, and he laid his ship on the enemy's port side, a little abaft the mainmast. Headed by young Bowen, the boarders soon had possession of her decks, and by 1 a.m. she struck her colours, the action having lasted three-quarters of an hour. The prize proved to be the *Pégase* (74), Captain the Chevalier de Cillart, who turned out to be an old acquaintance of Jervis. In the *Foudroyant* only Captain Jervis and five of his seamen were wounded, but on board the *Pégase* the number killed was great, and her masts and yards had received much damage. It blew so hard, and there was so much sea running, that the ships soon separated, and it was only with great difficulty, and after the loss of two boats, that a party of one officer and eighty men were conveyed to the prize and forty prisoners brought on board the *Foudroyant*. The instructions given by Jervis to the officer in command of the prize crew show his scrupulous

care for details and keen eye for discipline: he ordered that all the furniture, wearing apparel and everything else belonging to the captain and officers of the *Pégase* were to be taken care of, and that neither the French seamen nor the English were to be allowed to touch them, but that a sentry should be placed over them, and that nothing should be moved or brought out of the ship, even though it should be esteemed of no value, "for though I have the highest opinion of my officers, *we must not be even suspected of plunder.*"

How often, in modern times, would orders such as these have prevented the disgraceful looting that has been committed by both our own troops and those of foreign nations!

In the morning the weather moderated, and some other vessels of the squadron came up. The *Foudroyant* made signals for assistance, and the *Queen* sent an officer and a strong prize-crew into the *Pégase*. Captain Jervis deputed his nephew, Mr. Henry Rickets, to write to his parents the following letter:

"I have the happiness to inform you we have taken a seventy-four-gun ship from the French, after fifty minutes' action. We had not one man killed, only five wounded. My uncle has got a splinter, which has made both his eyes black. The ship's name is *Pégase*, seven months old, and the captain an old acquaintance of my uncle. We have taken sixteen or seventeen transports out of

twenty. We engaged till one in the morning, and shall most likely be with you soon.

"Yours affectionately,

"H. RICKETS."

Admiral Barrington, in his report to the Admiralty, said :

"My pen is not equal to the praise due to the good conduct, bravery, and discipline of Captain Jervis, his officers and seamen, upon this occasion. Let his own modest narrative speak for itself."

"'FOUDROYANT,'
"*April 19th*, 1782

"At sunset I was near enough to discover that the enemy consisted of three or four ships of war, two of them of the line, and seventeen or eighteen of convoy, and that the latter dispersed by signal. At half-past nine, I perceived the smallest of the ships of war speak with the headmost, and then bear away At a quarter past ten the sternmost of the line-of-battle ships, perceiving we came up with her very fast, bore away also ; I pursued her, and at seventeen minutes past twelve brought her to close action, which continued three-quarters of an hour, when, having laid her on board, on the larboard quarter, the French ship of war, the *Pégase*, of 74 guns and 700 men, commanded by Chevalier de Cillart, surrendered. I am happy to inform you that only two or three of the people, with myself, are slightly wounded, but I learn from the Chevalier de Cillart that the *Pégase* suffered very materially in masts and yards, her fore and mizzen-topmasts having gone away soon after the action."

In point of force the combatants were pretty evenly matched, for, though the *Foudroyant* was of somewhat larger tonnage and had three more guns on her broadside, still the French guns were of larger calibre, and the *Pégase* had a more numerous crew, besides soldiers in addition. The ship that was in the best order won ; Jervis had had his crew under his orders for six years, and his ship had been in action before, whilst the Frenchman was a newly commissioned ship. This told in those days, and will tell equally now and always. Admiral Barrington wrote to Mr. Rose :

"The *Pégase* is everything, and does the highest honour to Jervis. What a noble creature ! were we all like him, what might not be our expectations ! Is it not surprising that Jervis should take a ship of equal force without losing a man ? He, poor fellow, has got an honourable mark above his eye, which I conceive will be of no bad consequence, rather the reverse, for, as a man of middle age, it may make his fortune. The fair honour the brave.

"S. BARRINGTON."

Jervis was complimented on all sides, not only by the King and his ministers, who rewarded him with the Red Ribbon and a baronetcy, but by all his brother officers as well—a kind of approval which he must have valued even more.

In September 1782 the *Foudroyant* was one of the fleet sent out under Lord Howe to relieve

Gibraltar. At this time, Sir George Rodney having been successful in the West Indies, and our troops having been withdrawn from America, all thoughts were with the brave defender of Gibraltar.

French and Spanish fleets, amounting to about fifty sail, had been collected to cover the attack on it that was now proceeding. No less than 1,200 pieces of heavy ordnance had been brought against the garrison. There were forty gunboats with heavy artillery, and as many bomb-vessels with 12-inch mortars, besides a large floating battery, etc. Nearly all the frigates and small armed vessels which Spain possessed were assembled, and 300 large boats were employed to keep the batteries constantly supplied with ammunition.

Such were the preparations by sea. Those by land were no less formidable. Twelve thousand French troops had joined the Spanish army, and the Duc de Brillon, having succeeded in reducing Port Mahon, was appointed to command the whole of the forces.

But no sooner were the batteries on the land side completed than General Eliott, by a judicious fire, destroyed them all. In no wise daunted by the enormous forces marshalled against him, he erected furnaces, and, discharging red-hot shot, contrived to set on fire the batteries and ships. About 4,000 in all of these red-hot missiles were fired during a

single day. The crews of many of the enemies' ships were in imminent danger of being burnt alive, but our gunboats, under Captain Curtis, very pluckily went to their assistance, rescuing numbers of them. Daylight broke on what must have been a most dreadful scene. Men could be seen struggling in the flames, and crying out for assistance, and the British were now as busily employed in saving the lives of the enemy as they had been in destroying them the day before. About the time of this attack Lord Howe sailed from the Channel with a fleet of thirty-four ships of the line, but, being delayed by contrary winds, it was not till October 11th that he entered the Straits.

Most of the transports missed Gibraltar, and were driven through the Straits. On their returning Lord Howe made a signal for Sir John Jervis, and directed him to receive on board the 25th Regiment, from the *Britannia*, to take under his orders the four line-of-battle ships and two frigates (which had also troops and ammunition on board) and to proceed forthwith to Gibraltar and land them there. He was, at the same time, to cover the *Buffalo* and her convoy, bound on the same errand. In three hours the whole were landed, together with 100 barrels of gunpowder, supplied to the garrison from the *Foudroyant*. Jervis then proceeded to fall into the line of Barrington's division, which bore the brunt of the partial action that followed

between thirty-four British sail of the line and forty-four of the combined fleets of France and Spain. The whole of this service, and the rapid manner in which it was executed, seems to have impressed Lord Howe with a high opinion of Jervis's skill and energy.

Having thus relieved Gibraltar, Lord Howe re-entered the Straits, and then proceeded home. Campbell, in his *Lives of the Admirals*, wonders why the combined fleet allowed the relief to take place; but when one reads the account of the experiences of that fleet, as given by Admiral Tinling,[1] in the following letter to Sir W. Parker, and one considers the further damage which they had suffered during the bombardment, the marvel is, rather, that Lord Howe did not at once attack them after he had relieved the garrison.

Letter from Rear-Admiral C. Tinling to Sir William Parker

"SOUTHAMPTON,
"*March 16th*, 1808.

"With respect to Gibraltar, I was a stripling at the time, and am at this day the only naval officer, I may say naval man, to remember the privation and hardships of that memorable siege. The Spanish and French fleet, of forty-six

[1] Charles Tinling entered the service as a midshipman in March 1780, and greatly distinguished himself while in command of a gunboat in the defence of Gibraltar in September 1782. He was a lieutenant of the *Orion* in Howe's action of June 1st and died at Southampton, November 27th, 1840, as Rear-Admiral of the Red.

sail of the line, were anchored from Algeciréz to the Orange Grove. On the night of October 10th, 1782, there came on the most violent gale of wind I ever remember, the fleet firing guns of distress the whole of the night. At daylight on the morning of the 11th there were sixteen sail of the line drifted over to within two miles of the King's Bastion, the *S. Miguel* (72) on shore, and all the fleet with yards and topmasts down, and in the greatest confusion. As the weather became moderate about 6 a.m., the officers and seamen, with myself, left our tents and went off and took possession of the *S. Miguel.* The Spanish and French employed all that day in getting the sixteen sail back to their anchorage. At four p.m. the signal was made from the top of the Rock, 'The British fleet in sight!' One three-decker could not regain her anchorage, therefore made sail, weathered the Rock, and stood to the eastward.

"Lord Howe was an unfortunate commander, though a very brave one. Had the British fleet stood into the bay there would have been an end to the combined fleet; they could not have been saved.[1]

"At ten at night two sail of the line, with the

[1] In the *Life of Lord Barham*, he says:

"With Lord Sandwich's support, I determined on a measure which had never been attempted before, which was to bring every ship in ordinary into service of some kind or other; to listen to no excuses, but to patch them up so as to make them equal to temporary and home service, and by reducing their masts and number of guns, they served to the end of the war as part of the Western squadron and made part of the fleet under Lord Howe which relieved Gibraltar. To bear down all remonstrances, I visited all the yards myself. And amongst other ships laid up was the *Royal William*, built in Queen Anne's reign."

It is no wonder that Sir John Jervis chose the *Foudroyant* and the *Ville de Paris*, or that Nelson afterwards chose the *San Josef* for his ship.

Latona, another frigate, and the *Panther*, which had charge of the transports, anchored in Rosia Bay. I believe it was Captains Phipps and Hervey (of the last I am not quite sure). They landed powder, stores, and provisions (which we stood much in need of) and two regiments. The only transport taken (at the back of the Rock) was the one with the women and baggage of the regiments. Our ships put to sea the next day, and Sir R. Curtis took a passage in one of them to join Lord Howe and return to England with the fleet. The combined fleet took five days to refit before it put to sea, and at the first change of wind the British fleet passed through the Straits, followed by the combined fleet in one extended line.

"Believe me,

"My dear Parker,

"Faithfully yours,

"C. TINLING."

On the return of the fleet to England the *Foudroyant* was paid off.

During the seven years he had been in command of her, Jervis made the *Foudroyant* a splendid school for young officers. She had come to be looked upon as the best and most efficient ship in the service, and her captain as the most skilful commander. The following letter from the Duke of Richmond shows the estimation in which Jervis was held and the eagerness of young recruits to be received on board his ship.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"As it is by no means a matter of indifference to me whether my nephew receives

the best education possible at sea or the common one—which is very bad—I must rejoice at his being with you, where he will be made both a seaman and a gentleman. Good sense in education is rarely met with, and unreasonable severity, or total neglect, are the extremities which are oftener fallen into than that just medium observed on board the *Foudroyant*; for even attention, without judgment, is of little avail. From the little I have seen, and the much I have heard, I am convinced that Lord Gerald is a very lucky young man, to have been received by you.

"I am, my dear sir,

"Ever your most obedient

"and faithful servant,

"RICHMOND, etc."

Some idea of the even-handed discipline enforced by Jervis, without fear or favour, and tinged by no respect of persons, may be gathered from a letter he wrote to his sister when she proposed to enter her son—Jervis's nephew—into the Navy:

"I forgot to answer the passage in your letter relative to Edward, which I now do briefly thus: His choice of our profession must be entirely his own, and he should be made to understand that I do not encourage it by any means. That he must lie in the berth with the other midshipmen, live as they do, and have no other distinction whatsoever. For the first year, he must rise at daybreak, and apply closely to his studies, and to his seamanship; be very subordinate and respectful to all in authority over him, and never repine at the hardships and impositions he is bound to bear

in common with others. The life is a very rigorous one, and what few boys (educated as he has been) can bear.

"If he chooses to embark on these terms, I shall be ready to receive him; but if he disgraces me, and his family afterwards, by turning his back, I shall bury in total oblivion his alliance of blood (which is no tie to me when unaccompanied by manly virtue) and have no other feeling about him than I should have for any other indifferent person entrusted to my care, who acted in such a manner as not to merit my esteem and regard. I forgot to mention that after the first year, in which I expect he will become master of the theory of Navigation, he must watch and do his duty with punctuality and alertness, and at least with as much precision as the best midshipman in the ship—for I shall always expect *more* from a very near relative than from those I receive on recommendation. I must beg you will never order him any clothes without my participation, for I shall make him wear his worst jacket through the winter; he must not on any account be more expensive in dress or pocket-money than the others.

"Yours, etc.,

"J. JERVIS."

But although, before all things, a rigid disciplinarian who never spared himself or others, when necessity arose Jervis was essentially a kind-hearted and generous man, always on the look-out for opportunities of helping those who needed it.

In a letter to Jackson (Under-Secretary to the Admiralty) we have an instance of this.

"'FOUDROYANT,'
"*August 9th*, 1778.

"MY DEAR JACKSON,

"You must allow me to interest your humanity in favour of poor Spicer, who, overwhelmed with dropsy, asthma, and a large family, with nothing but his pay to support him under these afflictions, is appointed to the . . . under a mean man, and very likely to go to the East Indies. The letter he writes to the Board desiring to be excused from his appointment is dictated by me. Admiral Keppel has already offered to take Boger into the *Victory* if you promote, as you ought to do, out of her, and when that takes place I shall write for Spicer to be first lieutenant of the *Foudroyant* with intention to nurse him, and keep him clear of all expense.

"J. JERVIS."

The estimation in which a man is held by his friends and by those who have had opportunities of knowing and observing him closely generally furnishes a good idea to his character and disposition. The following letters serve to show the feeling which Jervis inspired in his friends and brother officers.

His old friend, Colonel Barré, writes to him after hearing of his wound in the action with the *Pégase*:

"MY DEAR JERVIS,

"I need not tell you how much I am alarmed at the different reports about you—for I declare solemnly that all the glory you can acquire will not compensate for the loss of you, if that should ever happen. This is not so manly

a sentiment as I ought to utter to you, but it comes from my heart.

"I rejoice most cordially at the honour you have gained, but I always expected as much. Let me hear from you when every doubt is removed. The danger you were said to be in shows the amazing number of friends you have.

"Ever most affectionately yours,

"H. BARRÉ."

Admiral Keppel wrote April 26th, 1782:

"I trust this letter, under cover, to your admiral in case you should have brought your ship to Spithead. I could not, in justice to my feelings of real friendship to you, refuse myself a day, in transmitting the sentiments of a grateful heart to your distinguished services and merit, and I rejoice to hear that the wound you have received is so likely to do well. My description to you of the general joy of the town will not require much pains to paint—that our first effort should be successful, and that my principal friend should appear so conspicuous an actor in the glory of it seems more than could have been expected in the ordinary course of things. I am,

"Your very sincere and humble servant,

"A. KEPPEL."

CHAPTER IV

TROUBLOUS TIMES

1775–1790

"There is a necessity for laying a foundation for future success while the peace lasts, and which must supersede every other consideration."—BARHAM.

IT is not necessary to give here a detailed account of the political history of Great Britain or of her relations with foreign nations, but simply to furnish a rough outline of the events which influenced the country at this time, more especially with reference to naval occurrences. Without this, it seems to me, the narrative of St. Vincent's life would be somewhat bare and unintelligible, since the causes and nature of the difficulties he had to overcome would hardly be understood by any ordinary reader.

The chief features of the second portion of the reign of George III. were the war with the North American Colonies and the recognition of their independence; the relaxation of the penal laws against Roman Catholics and the disgraceful riots which accompanied it; the beginning of the movement, which still continues, in favour of obtaining for Ireland an equality of civil rights

and equal commercial advantages independently of England; the apprehension aroused by the growing influence of the Crown, and the desire for a more full and responsible representation of the people in Parliament which began to be keenly felt in consequence of the vast increase in public expenditure occasioned by the war. All these things led to frequent ministerial changes, beginning with the overthrow of Lord North's Administration in 1782 and followed in rapid succession by the Rockingham, Shelburne, and Coalition Ministries, till the reins of government were firmly grasped and retained by the hands of Pitt.

It may safely be affirmed that, when Parliament claimed the right to tax our American Colonies and render their resources auxiliary to our own, its action was supported and endorsed by the great majority of the English people. The unexpected resistance of the colonists having rendered the enforcement of this claim hopeless, the ground next taken up was in the maintenance of the legislative, apart from the fiscal supremacy of the British Parliament.

The Declaration of Independence, the disasters of the war, and the accession, first covertly, and then openly, of France, Spain and Holland, to the cause of the revolted provinces at length induced the Rockingham Whigs to acquiesce in the policy of withdrawing all pretensions to supremacy by the mother-country. This they

did from necessity, and not from choice. They were as much opposed to colonial independence as the Shelburne Whigs, who were ultimately compelled to conclude peace on this basis only; they resorted to it as an unavoidable expedient to extricate the country from a calamitous and exhausting war.

Lord North was severely criticised for his want of foresight in dealing with the provinces. At first he made no addition to the peace establishment in the belief that the force on foot would be amply sufficient to reduce the colonies to obedience. Disappointed by their formidable resistance, he increased his expenditure and his armaments, till they attained a scale of unprecedented magnitude; but his efforts were not ably seconded. The surrender of General Burgoyne at Saratoga in 1777 and of the Marquis Cornwallis at Yorktown in 1781 were overwhelming disasters which do not seem to have been wholly due to the superior generalship of Gates and Washington. The naval administration of the country under Lord Sandwich was inefficient. Ships were sent out not properly equipped, the junior officers were jealous of one another and disobedient to their superiors. To such a degree had this refractoriness and insubordination—the results of bad discipline—extended in the fleets that the Admiralty were obliged to suppress those portions of the despatches of the commanders in which they

complained of the misconduct of their captains, evidently feeling, either from weakness or the pressure of the war, that they were not in a position to adopt decisive measures and bring the delinquents to justice.

A letter written by Sir George Rodney from Gibraltar on January 28th, 1780,[1] to Jackson at the Admiralty is an illustration of this:

"I am sure no person whatever will receive the news of the happy success of the squadron with more pleasure than yourself, as I know no person upon earth for whom I have a more sincere regard. I could not delay writing to you a few lines to convince you of my sincerity in that respect. Providence has allowed me to be the happy instrument of restoring in some measure the honour of the British flag; *to restore the old, good, necessary discipline to the British Navy* will be *of much more consequence.* 'Tis lost! it *must,* it *shall be restored.* I avoid all complaints, many!—many! I had the greatest reason to make, and if the fleet I am going to command should be as *negligent* and *disobedient* as part of that which sailed from England with me,—you will hear of dismission upon dismission! I must, I will be obeyed. I will not tell you particulars now. Many brave, excellent, active, good officers!—others—negligent, slow, inactive, disobedient! 'Tis high time they retire and leave the British ships to be commanded by none but those who are truly anxious to raise the honour of this country.

"GEORGE RODNEY."

[1] *History of the Public Revenue of the British Empire,* Pt. III. p. 87.

It was this lost discipline which, as we shall see, Sir John Jervis restored to the Navy, for he never missed an opportunity of bringing forward the best officers, or of stamping out disobedience.

England laboured under another disadvantage in this contest. All the spectators of the struggle between the mother-country and her colonies were on one side. The prayers and wishes of every European State were in favour of their emancipation. They encouraged and aided them in their resistance. They supplied them with warlike stores, clandestinely received their agents, assisted them with able and enterprising officers, opened their ports for the reception of their privateers, and, when these underhand practices became too notorious to be longer concealed, they threw off the mask and declared openly against us, leaving this country mangled, bleeding, and, as they thought, crippled for ever.

But events proved it to be only the syncope of a giant. The irrepressible energy of her internal industries, which, though it had not yet reached its full development, was now about to receive fresh impetus, soon set England on her feet again.

Externally, however, the powers of the country had never been more enfeebled, dispirited, and disjointed, than when the peace of 1783 was concluded by the Shelburne Ministry.

The country was impoverished; the state of our finances was deplorable. Our debt, funded and unfunded, had increased to upwards

of 250 millions, and the annual interest on it fell little short of nine and a half millions. But the most alarming[1] symptom was our naval inferiority. The confederated navies of the Bourbons greatly outnumbered that of England. Exclusive of the Dutch fleet of 25 sail of the line, the forces of France and Spain amounted to 140 sail of the line, whereas the whole force of Britain fit for service did not number 100, and of these many were undermanned and in a very bad state of repair. Many of our best troops had been captured at Saratoga and Yorktown, and Ireland was menaced with invasion. In short, the nation was well-nigh overpowered by enemies and difficulties, and peace on almost any terms seemed its only refuge.

The close of 1779 and the beginning of 1780 were thus a period of great national humiliation, disaster, and embarrassment. The combined fleets of France and Spain rode triumphantly in the Channel, threatening to make a hostile descent upon our coasts. Ireland was in a very perturbed state. Incendiary attempts, supposed to have been planned at the instigation of the enemy, were made to set fire to the royal dockyards and arsenals. Immense losses were sustained at sea by the capture of the outward-bound East and West India fleets. The French

[1] "In August, 1798, General Humbert (an old rabbit-skin merchant) landed in Ireland with a force of 800 French and defeated 6,000 English. The defeat was a complete rout."

W. E. H. LECKY.

had succeeded in sending a powerful armament to aid the revolted colonies, and a treaty of armed neutrality against the maritime claims of England was concluded between France, Spain, and Holland.

These losses and mortifications seemed to deprive the nation of all energy, and, though the reform of Parliament was urgently called for, it was not introduced till the session of 1782. To show how necessary it had become, it is stated that on March 7th, 1781, a loan of twelve millions was issued, and contracted for, on the most lavish terms, the scrip distributed among the supporters of the Minister (Lord North) being sold the next day in the money market at an advance of 10 to 11 per cent.

On January 20th, 1783, the preliminaries of peace were signed. It was about this time (1782–3) that Sir John Jervis paid off the *Foudroyant.* A listless and indolent life would have been ill-suited to a man who had hitherto spent his days in an uninterrupted series of active professional pursuits. He therefore obtained a seat in Parliament for Launceston. To parliamentary eloquence Sir John Jervis made no sort of pretence. Indeed, he had no very high opinion of its utility, never perceiving the finest oration to have any effect on the numbers of the division, to which alone he looked. He therefore did not aim at being a debater; yet, when he deemed it necessary to express his

opinion, his manner, from the first moment of his maiden speech, was natural, unembarrassed, and forcible. His thoughts were collected, and in the little he said his language exhibited a mind at once clear, accurate, manly, and energetic. He thus produced on those who heard him the impression he desired.

Long before he appeared in the House of Commons most of its leading members were well acquainted with his opinions. In his early days he had been intimate with Admiral Saunders, and with Wolfe, and later on with Admirals Barrington and Keppel and Sir Charles Grey. He was also well known to the Whig leaders, Rockingham, the Duke of Richmond, Lord Shelburne, and Mr. Fox. Sir John Jervis thus became, and continued through life, the staunch supporter of the Whig party and of its principles, or perhaps he should be better described as a Whig Royalist, for although, in all constitutional questions, he strongly inclined towards the Liberal side, yet he was always a staunch supporter of the prerogatives of the Crown.

He spoke but seldom, on naval subjects only, and with great moderation. On a motion respecting certain abuses in withholding seamen's prize-money, he referred in scathing tones to the profuse expenditure lavished on the chapel of Greenwich Hospital, which he called "a preposterous jumble of art," and stigmatised as a disgrace to the country. He also pleaded the

cause of the wounded and superannuated seamen, and Mr. Secretary Dundas (Lord Melville) who had already done much for them, promised that the earliest and most particular attention should be given to the grievances of these men.

On another occasion he was brought to his feet when Captain Brodie was passed over in a flag promotion (apparently from want of interest), and made an eloquent speech in favour of his claim to recognition :

"I likewise feel it my indispensable duty to do justice to that great man whose case is now under consideration, and to declare that a more gallant officer, a person of more zeal, of more true courage, or of more enthusiastic spirit of enterprise never was in His Majesty's service.

"Captain Brodie's repeated applications to be employed in the war with Spain, when she joined France against us, was a sufficient answer to any argument which could be adduced from his having in his application for a pension declared himself at that time incapable of service.

"His active spirit and his professional zeal had induced him to continue his command, immediately after the loss of his arm, and the consequence was that his wound grew worse from too much exertion in an unwholesome climate, and he was rendered for three or four years incapable of serving; but when he was better he was desirous of returning to the exercise of his duties as an officer, and it would, perhaps, have been well for the service if the Board of Admiralty had accepted his offer.

"At a time when party disputes divided the Navy, and ran so high as to greatly injure the

service, Captain Brodie not only kept his character free from that imputation, but his conduct stood forth conspicuous for its bravery and its merit.

"It fell to the share of a most distinguished officer sitting at a court-martial on an officer of eminence, to examine Captain Brodie, then commanding the *Stafford*, and to draw from him (though very reluctantly) an account of the proceedings of the day, on which the conduct of the officer upon trial had taken place, when, after hearing Captain Brodie out, the examining officer burst forth into an exclamation of applause, and declared that the oldest officers in the service might be glad to give up all the glory of their actions to have acted as Captain Brodie did on that day. Now on this fact alone [continued Sir John] I appeal to the generosity and to the justice of the House, and I ask you whether you can refuse to procure for a gallant officer that rank and those professional honours to which he is so justly entitled; for an officer worn down with age, and still smarting under the wounds received in the service of his country, who, unless justice be redressed, cannot lay his head in the grave in peace."

The motion was resisted by the Government, and rejected, but Sir John Jervis's manly speech on behalf of his brother officer elicited much applause even from the unrelenting minister. The Whigs at this time were in opposition, and Sir John Jervis's name is to be found upon all their division lists in the struggle for liberty, while he was a regular attendant at all meetings in favour of religious toleration and parliamentary reform. Just before Sir John entered

Parliament he married Miss Martha Parker, daughter of Sir Thomas Parker, the Chief Baron of the Court of the Exchequer, to whom he had been devotedly attached for some years.

In 1786 he was placed on a commission appointed to examine and report upon a scheme for the fortification of Portsmouth and Plymouth. It seems to have been a well-concerted attempt at "jobbery and extravagance," but so completely did he unravel and expose its disadvantages that the scheme was forthwith rejected. In this affair he gave evidence of great capacity for business, and a keen and sagacious scent for anything that smacked of fraud or dishonesty.

It now seemed as if his business on shore was over, and the blue water was about to claim him again. In 1787 he was promoted to the rank of Rear-Admiral at the age of fifty-two, and he commissioned the *Carnatic* (74); but it was only for a short time, for the dispute which arose between Prussia and Holland having been amicably settled, the *Carnatic* was soon paid off, and he was again on shore until 1790, when Spain brought about strained relations by manifestations at Nootka Sound, and showed her ambition to monopolise the sovereignty and trade of the New World, and her jealousy of any rivalry on the part of England. The Channel Fleet under Lord Howe was kept in readiness, and Jervis flew his flag as Rear-Admiral of the

Blue in the *Prince*; but when the dispute with Spain was settled without hostilities, the *Prince* was paid off and every flag-officer was allowed to promote one midshipman.

Sir John Jervis selected a well-conducted young officer who had no friends, but was the son of a lieutenant who had done good service, and, in answer to profuse thanks on his part, the admiral thus explained the reasons for his choice:

"I named you for the lieutenant I was allowed to promote because you had merited the good opinion of your superiors, and that you were the son of an old officer and worthy man, in no great affluence.

"A steady perseverance in that conduct, which has now caused you to be thus distinguished, is the most likely means to carry you forward in your profession; for I trust that other officers of my rank will observe the maxim I do, to prefer the son of a *brother officer, when deserving*, before any other.

"I have the honour to be, etc., etc.,

"J. JERVIS."

There can be no doubt whatever that in this Jervis was not only clear-headed and just, but wise and practical as well. There is much to be said in favour of the old custom of apprenticeship. The traditions of a father (to say nothing of the prior claims of one who has served the State) are most likely to be carried on by his son, and the habits and brains he has inherited will incline the son to follow readily in his father's footsteps.

CHAPTER V

THE NINE YEARS WAR

1792—1802

"Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel; but, being in,
Bear 't that the opposed may beware of thee."
Hamlet, Polonius to Laertes.

THE period upon which we are now about to enter is one of the most interesting and important in history; namely, the nine years of war which terminated in the Treaty of Amiens in 1802.

It demonstrated by the mass of extraordinary events crowded into its brief space, that, whatever may have been the influence of civilisation in diffusing luxury and enjoyment, it had had no tendency to lessen the activity, energy, and diversity of the human intellect, and human passions, when roused to action. The French Revolution brought forth giants—giants in speculations and practice, in political warfare, in morals, patriotism, and crime.

The first and most prominent event of this remarkable period was the commencement of the war of 1793 and the novel principles from which it originated. Unlike former wars, it

took its rise from the hitherto unimaginable ground of *opinion*—an opinion very general in England—of contingent danger, from the acts, chiefly internal, of a neighbouring State. Inflamed by the writings of Burke, and by accounts brought by the French immigrants who now inundated the country, people read with horror the details of the Parisian insurrections, of the insults offered to the French Royal Family, and of the trial and treatment of Louis XVI.

France was no longer the same nation after the retreat of the Duke of Brunswick and the successful resistance of 1792. The instinct of nationality had been evoked, foreigners had been everywhere driven from her frontiers. She was intoxicated by her triumphs, and by her sudden escape from the thrall of the coalition. Republicanism had become the faith—almost the fanatic faith—of the nation, and the zeal of the French in its propagation was hardly less than that shown in a former age by the followers of Mohammed. Equality was esteemed a universal right; and the newly accepted views in regard to the solidarity of the human race led men to believe that the whole family of man ought to share in its blessings. General Lafayette, after helping the Americans to establish their independence, purposed assisting the Irish Volunteers in achieving a similar boon. But Lafayette was only a lukewarm type of the zeal of many of the French republicans of 1792–3.

The Reign of Terror in France began about the middle of 1793 and continued through a great part of the following year, the leading actors in it being Robespierre, Danton, Marat, St. Just, and Couthon, most of whom were young lawyers, whose ages averaged about thirty years.

They governed by the guillotine, and on the principle adopted by the Dey of Algiers, who beheaded every one whom he disliked. "The glory of France," says Madame de Staël,[1] "was decimated by the deaths of Roland, Malesherbes, Bailly, Lavoisier, Vergniaud, Guadet, and Condorcet." Eighty victims a day were not unusually offered up to the Moloch of anarchy. The Revolution became blind, as well as mad, and on January 21st, 1793, Louis XVI. was beheaded.

On January 28th a royal message was delivered to the English Parliament, informing them that the King had determined to augment his forces for the purpose of supporting his allies and of opposing views of aggrandisement and ambition on the part of France, at all times dangerous to the interests of Europe, but peculiarly so when connected with the propagation of principles subversive of the peace and order of all civil society.

The British Government began to display a vigorous energy. The vote of seamen, which in

[1] *Considérations sur la Révolution Française de Règne de la Terreur.*

the preceding year had been cut down to 16,000, was now increased to 45,000, and several fleets of line-of-battle ships and frigates were ordered to be put into commission.

One of the first objects in view was the despatch of a sufficient naval and military force to the West Indies, not merely to safeguard our own islands, but, if practicable, to take possession of those of France, since it was believed that in that part of the world the Republican Government of France had been but coldly received.

In the month of November Sir John Jervis, now raised to the rank of Vice-Admiral, hoisted his flag in the *Boyne*, of 98 guns, and took under his command two 74-gun ships, two 64's, a dozen frigates, and six small craft. His friend, Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Grey, was appointed to command the land forces, consisting of 7,000 men.

When Jervis was selected to command the squadron he had been promised a considerably larger force than he eventually received. It is not known what the reason was for withholding the reinforcements which he had been led to expect.

Sir John Jervis afterwards himself made the following observations with regard to this episode:

"When the West Indies expedition came into discussion at the Admiralty in October 1793, Lord Chatham pledged himself to me that Rear-Admiral Gell, with one second-rate and two 74-gun ships, should join me at Barbadoes,

and that the *Leviathan* (after being new copper-sheathed) or some other 74 should follow.

"This assurance caused my taking a very strong part (with Sir Charles Grey) against the unanimous opinion of all the principal land officers, particularly Generals Prescott and Thomas Dundas, Adjutant-General Francis Dundas, and Quartermaster-General Symes, who mentioned that our force was inadequate to the reduction of Martinique, and that it was madness to attempt it. I never received a letter from Lord Chatham or the Secretary of the Admiralty to inform me that these ships were countermanded, nor was I ever acquainted that Rear-Admiral Murray with a squadron was ordered to America; although the protection of our settlements and trade on the Continent (of America) formed a part of my instructions, and I was kept in continual alarm for the safety of Nova Scotia and the island of Bermudas, pending the capture of the West India Islands; and was strongly prompted to send a squadron to intercept Admiral Venstible and the invaluable trade he had charge of, which I certainly should have done, had the engagement of the Admiralty respecting the four line-of-battle ships under Admiral Gell been fulfilled. The moment the West India Islands were reduced I sent the *Quebec* and *Alarm* to Bermudas, and afterwards the *Ceres* (in a deplorable state of sickness) with a supply of arms which Governor Hamilton demanded, as absolutely necessary for his preservation, menaced with an invasion from Virginia. The *Blanche* and *Zebra* were before detached to Halifax with His Royal Highness Prince Edward for the protection of that important post, and the *Beaulieu* followed, very sickly it is true, but the men likely to recover in a northern climate. The *Terpsichore*, wanting

an entire new set of masts and other repairs was also despatched—first to relieve Sir Charles Knowles in the *Dædalus*, who had been blocked up and grossly insulted by the enemy at Norfolk (in Virginia) for six months; and, after performing this service, to proceed to Halifax for new masts and a refit.

"These necessary detachments left me with few ships, and those so sickly—from the unexampled services their officers and crews had performed—that some of them could scarcely heave their anchors up, although I had repeatedly stated to the Board and to Lord Chatham the insufficiency of the force."

Although this formal explanation was put on record by Sir John Jervis, who felt much aggrieved at not receiving his promised reinforcements, still he made the best of everything at the time, and carried out all his projects most admirably.

Among the officers who served under him in this expedition may be mentioned his flag-captain, George Grey (the son of his great friend the commander of the troops), Mr. Berry (afterwards the distinguished Sir Edward Berry), who had just returned from a long cruise in the West Indies, and, finding the *Boyne* about to sail, applied immediately to serve in her, Mr. Bowen, of the *Foudroyant* (who was one of the lieutenants), and Mr. Beynton (who afterwards distinguished himself at the battle of Trafalgar). The latter very nearly failed to get his appointment, for, owing to some mistake, it was reported to Jervis that he had just been married,

and in answer to his application he received the following reply :

"SIR,

"You having thought fit to take to yourself a wife, are to look for no further attentions from

"Your humble servant,

"J. JERVIS." [1]

Beynton hastened to answer that "he could not imagine who could have so traduced him, or who could have imagined him capable of the crime—for he disliked the idea of marriage as much as Sir John did—being only wedded to the service"—and, having thus made his peace with his admiral, was appointed as a lieutenant of the *Boyne*.

In January 1794 the squadron arrived at Barbadoes, and, while preparations were being made for an attack on Martinique, proclamations were circulated through the islands, offering them liberal terms provided they were willing to surrender to the British forces. These overtures not being accepted, the expedition proceeded to attack. The plan arranged for the capture of Martinique was to attack in three separate places, so as to divide the enemy's forces. At Trinité General Dundas was assisted by Commodore Thompson. At Case Navire

[1] Sir John Jervis himself did not marry until he had seen much service, and he objected to his officers marrying early, holding that it tended to make them linger in port.

Colonel Sir Charles Gordon had with him Captain Rogers in the *Quebec*—and at Trois Rivières General Sir Charles Grey was supported by Sir John Jervis himself.

On February 5th the *Boyne* anchored in Marin Bay.

After a formal summons to surrender, which was refused, the boats dashed in to the shore. The French forts opened a heavy fire, which was at length silenced by the guns of the *Boyne* and *Veteran*, and the disembarkation was effected. The enemy hurriedly retired, leaving behind them a train to explode the magazine. Luckily this was discovered in time to prevent a disaster, and the British flag was hoisted on the forts in Marin Bay amid the cheers of the attacking force. Two days afterwards a second summons was sent, calling on General Rochambeau to surrender the island; and, this also having been refused, Sir Charles Grey himself landed with 2,500 bayonets and General Rochambeau hastily retreated, destroying every house on his way, and threw himself, with all the forces he could collect, into Fort Bourbon.

Sir Charles Grey continued to advance, as he was to be joined at Fort Sallée by Sir John Jervis. There was in the bay an island called Pigeon Island, which, so long as it remained in the possession of the enemy, was a great obstacle to the ships entering the harbour. Brigadier-General Whyte was directed to take possession

of the heights of Maturin which commanded it, and, with the help of 200 seamen under Captains Grey and Nugent, this was speedily accomplished, the heights being stormed at the point of the bayonet.

On the same night that Fort Maturin was taken the army, with great toil, erected fresh batteries over the island, which were ready to open fire at daylight, and, the fleet having meanwhile taken up a position close to the forts, the attack commenced.

After a bombardment lasting two hours, the enemy surrendered unconditionally.

The whole bay being now open to the squadron, Sir Charles Grey moved his forces to Bruno, where he was joined by a division under Major-General Dundas, and a vigorous attack was made on the forts of Pierre, this being the last stage preliminary to the investment of Fort Bourbon. General Dundas had had hard work, and had met with opposition both on the beach and from the forts. Captain Faulknor, who was working with him, led his squadron into Gallion Bay, placing his sloop, to the admiration of every one, as close alongside the chief battery as the water would permit, and pouring in a fire from his guns at close quarters, whilst the troops charged with the bayonet. The French fought desperately, but were at length defeated.

Forts Louis and Bourbon were now the only obstacles, but fatigue was telling on our men,

who were not used to the tropical heat and rains. Indeed, it was only owing to the rapidity of the attack that they had been able to hold out, for longer operations on shore would probably have proved fatal to them.

The British divisions had now all arrived. The squadrons had rejoined the flag, and all was ready for the final attack.

Just at this moment His Royal Highness the Duke of Kent arrived from Canada and took command of the troops.

Whilst they were occupied in erecting forts and digging trenches, the ships had bombarded, and landed heavy artillery and stores for a siege. As soon as the ammunition was on shore a party of 300 seamen under Captain Grey, acting in conjunction with the Engineers, dragged four of the heavy guns to the top of Mont Sounier, a hill overlooking the forts, from which General Bellegarde's force in the valley could be commanded.

The dogged pertinacity of the seamen in dragging their guns a distance of five miles over rough ground, partly exposed to fire, was the admiration of the troops. They had to make their way for a mile through a thick wood, and across a swamp, and then up steep heights which even mules found difficult of ascent, then across a torrent-bed, the banks of which had to be levelled, impeded all the time by the rains and by a heavy fire from the forts. This

was all completed on the third day of the attack.

On March 15th everything was ready. A summons to surrender was answered by a sortie in force, which was repulsed by the third battalion of light infantry and a party of sailors under Captain Faulknor.

On March 17th the bombardment continued, and in the afternoon a very gallant attempt was made by Lieutenant Bowen of the *Boyne* to rescue some English sailors who were reported to be confined in the *Bienvenue*, a large frigate which the French had moored with chain-cables in the roadstead. It was feared that the fire from our batteries in the intended assault on the forts and frigate might kill some of our men who were supposed to be prisoners on board of her. Lieutenant Bowen, therefore, volunteered to rescue them. A division of boats was entrusted to him. Lieutenant Beynton, who had left the *Boyne* and was now first lieutenant of the *Ulysses*, commanded one of the boats. Sir John Jervis used to say:

"I shall never forget little Beynton[1] on that occasion, standing erect in the stern-sheets of his boat, waving his sword over his head, amidst a shower of grape-shot, whilst urging his men at the oars to be foremost, if possible, in the assault."

[1] Eleven years afterwards Captain Beynton, in the *Leviathan*, at Trafalgar, laid his ship alongside the *S. Asturias* (74), and after a short action boarded, captured, and took his prize in tow.

It was broad daylight, and the enemy tried the range. The instant the boats were within shot a tremendous fire from the forts and frigate opened on them. But Bowen was not to be stayed. The frigate was boarded, and her captain, officers, and most of the crew were made prisoners. It was found, however, that there were no English on board, and, as it was impossible to cut the chain-cables, the frigate had to be left, Bowen returning with his prisoners. This plucky attack was visible to every one, both from the heights and from the decks of the squadron, and much inspirited the forces; it was, therefore, determined to attack the forts in a similar manner on the morrow. The ships told off for this duty were the *Asia* (64) and the *Zebra*, assisted by the armed boats of the fleet. The *Zebra*, with bamboo scaling-ladders triced up to her shrouds, was ordered to lead in, and at the signal both ships got under weigh. The *Asia* led in towards the mouth of the harbour, receiving discharges of grape and round-shot, without returning fire. Suddenly, to the surprise of every one, she wore round, and sailed away from the fort. The admiral immediately sent Captain Grey on board of her, thinking that her captain had been killed; but he returned with the news that there was nothing the matter. Again she sailed in, with the same result. It was found, later, that the cause of this strange behaviour was that they were piloted

CAPTAIN FAULKNOR, IN THE "ZEBRA," 16 GUNS, STORMING FORT ROYAL, MARTINIQUE, CONTAINING 123 MEN WELL PROVIDED, COMMANDED BY ROCHAMBEAU.

By kind permission of Messrs. T. H. Parker.

in by a former captain of the Port, M. de Tourelles, who seems to have lost his head and piloted her into danger of running aground.

On the first unexpected failure of the *Asia* Captain Faulknor, of the *Zebra*, though within musket-shot of the forts, lay to, and still refrained from returning fire, though experiencing a heavy fire himself. But when he saw he need expect no assistance from the *Asia*, and that his men were falling, though not disheartened, he dropped his foresail, and, making straight for the fort, laid his sloop close under its guns within fifteen feet of the wall. In an instant the scaling-ladders flew from the rigging, the boats towing astern were used as a bridge, and Captain Faulknor headed his boarders over the parapet and into the fort; whilst the armed boats, under Captains Nugent and Riou, dashed across the bay to support his heroic attack. Having mounted the walls, the assailants found themselves in the covered way between the outer and inner gates, with a whole French regiment awaiting their approach. A terrible musketry fire thinned the ranks of the British sailors, but nothing could withstand their courage. They charged the enemy, and, the whole regiment laying down their arms, Captain Faulknor led his men still forward. Forcing their way through the iron gates, they soon gained the top of the citadel; the French colours were struck, and the English hoisted in their place, amidst

shouts of triumph from the armed boats, from the squadron, and from the army. As soon as the British ensign was displayed over the fort Captain Faulknor sent his second lieutenant, Mr. Hill (afterwards Admiral Sir Henry Hill), to the Casemates, where the officers' families and the sick and wounded were, to assure them of protection, and afterwards Mr. Hill lowered the drawbridge to the Commander-in-Chief of the British army. Surely, there never was a finer or braver attack than this in all our annals!

As soon as he had secured possession of the fort and the frigate in the roadstead, Captain Faulknor returned to his ship, taking with him about 150 French prisoners from the regiment that had surrendered, and, the tide having risen, the *Zebra* was got afloat, and sailed out to the squadron.

Her maintopmast having been shot away, the sloop came close to the admiral's stern under her fore and mizzen top-sails. She was greeted by cheers from the *Boyne*, the band playing "See the conquering hero comes." Sir John Jervis had witnessed Faulknor's intrepid exploit with enthusiastic delight, and, determining to mark his admiration of it, paid him one of those happy compliments, peculiar to him, by which he was wont to reward and encourage brilliant conduct on the part of officers serving under him.

The signal was made for the captain of the

Zebra to come on board the flagship, and, as soon as he was seen approaching, Sir John Jervis ordered all hands on deck. The officers assembled on the quarter-deck with their admiral, who greeted the hero of the hour at his first step on the quarter-deck, and, presenting to him his commission as post-captain, addressed him as follows:

"Captain Faulknor, by your daring courage, this day, a French frigate has fallen into our hands. I have ordered her to be taken into our service, and here is your commission to command her, in which I have named her after yourself, sir, *The Undaunted.*"

Upon the success of this assault General Rochambeau sent in a flag of truce, and terms of capitulation of the island were soon arranged.

In Sir John Jervis's despatch to the Admiralty he gives the army precedence throughout, a compliment characteristic of him, and one which shows how cordially the two services worked together.

In a letter written some time afterwards, when he had been, and felt he had been, badly treated by the Admiralty, he breaks out into this assertion:

"I arrogate nothing by asserting that no two officers of His Majesty's service would have succeeded in the expedition against Martinique, Saint Lucia, and Guadeloupe, except Sir Charles Grey and myself."

Having thus taken the island of Martinique, the fleet and army, after leaving a sufficient garrison, set sail for St. Lucia, which was speedily captured, and, a garrison having been left there also, they proceeded to the island of Guadeloupe, where the French had collected all their remaining forces.

The *Boyne*, *Veteran*, *Winchelsea*, *Blanche*, and *Zebra* took with them all the troops that could be spared, and anchored off the batteries at Grozier, and, while the *Winchelsea* silenced their fire, the troops and 400 seamen, led by Captains Grey and Faulknor, were landed.

On the following morning the forts were attacked. The assaulting force was in three divisions. The Duke of Kent led the first against Fort Marcot, Major-General Dundas the second against Fort d'Épée, while the third was to give support wherever it might be needed.

At 5 o'clock, the concerted hour, a gun from the *Boyne* sounded the signal to advance. In an instant the heights swarmed with the stormers. The troops rushed to the gates of Fort Marcot, while the sailors made for the embrasures, into which most of them recklessly jumped, many of the brave fellows falling dead within them; the struggle was terrific while it lasted, and on both sides the losses were heavy, for the ground was disputed inch by inch; indeed it seemed doubtful who would keep it, until the third division, coming up, decided the day. The French gave

way, and as many as dared leaped over the walls and fled to the town of Point à Pitre, leaving both forts in the possession of the British.

Captain Faulknor had a narrow escape. Among the foremost to enter, at the head of his men, he grappled with a French officer, who proved too powerful for him. He was thrown and disarmed, and was about to receive a thrust from his antagonist when one of the *Blanche's* quartermasters pinned the Frenchman with his boarding-pike, thus preserving the life of him who was termed by Sir John Jervis "the idol of the squadron," and by Sir Charles Grey "the admiration of the whole army."

A regiment was left to garrison Point à Pitre and the general embarked, with the rest of the army, in the *Boyne* and *Veteran* to attack the forts in other parts of the island. Sir Charles Grey conducted the operations. The chain of batteries on the heights was stormed by the Grenadiers under the Duke of Kent, and the Light Infantry under Colonel Coote. The remaining troops, under General Dundas, attacked the more distant fortifications. As soon as the highest battery was taken, its guns were turned on the forts, and shortly afterwards, General Dundas having rejoined the main body with his force, the forts capitulated.

Thus the conquest of the islands was completed.

It was now the end of April, the campaign

having lasted scarcely three months, and Sir John Jervis was able to inform the Admiralty that "all the French islands were reduced." This brilliant success, with the inadequate forces on the station, must be attributed to two causes: First to the remarkable harmony, good feeling, and courtesy which prevailed between the land and sea forces; and secondly to the splendid emulation which Sir John Jervis was able to excite amongst his subordinates.

Sir John Jervis, afterwards testifying to his admiration and affection for Sir Charles Grey, said, "Neither of us wrote a letter on service to the other during the whole campaign."

It was after the Duke of Kent had left for Canada, and the inspection of the Islands and their garrisons had taken place, that the difficulties of the small force available were chiefly felt. The losses from continual fighting, and the fatigues endured, had already thinned the ranks, and now yellow fever began to destroy the forces both on sea and land, so that the garrisons were found to be miserably insufficient.

Before Sir John Jervis could complete his inspection he was himself attacked by this scourge, and for a time his life was in imminent danger.

The exhaustion produced by continued labour and fatigue, in tropical heats and rains had already so prostrated his health that he had asked to be recalled in April, and the Admiralty

had consented to his appeal, but he had not availed himself of this permission. Now, however, early in June, it was so necessary that he should have an immediate change of climate that the *Boyne* proceeded to St. Christopher, and was watering for her voyage when a schooner arrived from Guadeloupe, bringing urgent despatches to the Commander-in-Chief. Jervis was ill in his cot, but immediate orders were given to cease watering and get under weigh.

The hurricane season was approaching, and yellow fever was rampant, when that monster of cruelty, Victor Hugues, arrived at Guadeloupe, with fresh forces and ships, and, proclaiming universal equality and freedom, amongst the excitable negro population, he let loose their wildest passions and hurried them into the most violent outrages of maddened fury. The excesses of barbarous torture, and wanton cold-blooded slaughter, which he committed, both on the former royalist inhabitants and on the English soldiery, were unheard of. Not even the sick in the hospitals received any mercy at his hands. Even the most callous might shudder at the enormities perpetrated by this wretch, who came as the emissary of the blood-stained Republic and the congenial instrument of Robespierre. The news received by Sir John Jervis and Sir Charles Grey, from Guadeloupe, was to the effect that Major-General Dundas had suc-

cumbed to yellow fever, and Colonel Blondell had succeeded in the command. Victor Hugues had landed at Grande Terre in such force that resistance could not be long maintained, and, after two attempts, the enemy had taken Fort Fleur d'Épée. The two Commanders-in-Chief immediately proceeded to collect all the forces they could get together, including all that could be spared from St. Lucia and Martinique; but the troops available were at once so few and so sick and weakly, that finally they had to be sent on shore, and the ships were laid up in Martinique during the hurricane season.

In the unsuccessful fight at Grozier, in Martinique, the gallant Captain Lewis Robertson was shot dead, while leading a party of seamen, to support the 43rd regiment. He fell in the act of cheering on his men, and beseeching them to trust only to the bayonet and pike.

As may be seen from the following letter, Sir John Jervis was much affected at his loss:

"The fate of Captain Robertson, who had highly distinguished himself, fills my mind with the deepest regret. He had long been a child of misfortune, though he possessed talents to merit every success and prosperity. As I am informed that he has left an infant family and a widow unprovided for, I beg leave to recommend them to the protection and good offices of their Lordships, as a powerful encouragement to officers in similar circumstances to emulate so great an example."

On hearing of further successes by the enemy at Guadeloupe, Sir John Jervis (though the hurricane season was not yet over) went to the assistance of the garrison, but was only able to bring off the sickly remnant of our troops, for, unfortunately, it was not possible to give assistance to the royalist inhabitants, and they had to be left to the mercy of that inhuman barbarian, Victor Hugues, who chained them together in the Place d'Armes and had them fired upon by the infuriated negroes, maddened by rum. Half an hour after, the whole of them, dead or alive—and the latter were numerous—were buried together in one ditch. This horror might have been avoided had the reinforcements promised by the Government been forthcoming.

But now a relief arrived in the shape of the *Majestic*, bearing the flag of Rear-Admiral Caldwell, with the *Theseus* and *Bellona* in company. The command of the troops was transferred from Sir Charles Grey, whose ill-health obliged him to return to England, to General Sir John Vaughan, while Admiral Caldwell was instructed to relieve Sir John Jervis. His zeal, unabated even in extreme sickness, had borne him through fatigues in an extraordinary way, but now he felt that he must retire, and accordingly Sir Charles Grey took passage home with him in the *Boyne*.

At the end of December, when, after a tedious and tempestuous voyage, the coast of Ireland

had been sighted and the end of the voyage was approaching, a scene occurred which is described in a letter to Dr. Baird from General Sir Rufane Donkin, showing what took place on board the *Boyne*, in December 1794, between Sir Charles Grey and Sir John Jervis.

"We had made the coast of Ireland in our voyage from the West Indies, when most of the company having left the Admiral's table (except myself, the Admiral, and the General), Sir Charles rose to go out on the quarter-deck, when Sir John stopped him, as he passed his chair, and begged him to sit down, while he proposed one toast; since they were in sight of land and their united naval and military services at an end. Sir Charles Grey immediately sat down; when Sir John Jervis, taking him by the hand in the kindest manner, which was returned by a look and manner equally kind on the part of Sir Charles, said: 'My dear Sir Charles, the toast I have to propose is one you will, I am sure, willingly drink; it is this: May the same cordiality and zealous co-operation in future exist in all the united operations of our Army and our Navy which has been so remarkably conspicuous in our late campaign, and which I attribute to a cause we both know and feel: to the warm friendship and mutual confidence which existed between us as the commanders, a feeling which also pervaded every rank in both services.'"

Sir Charles Grey's answer was:

"'Indeed, my dear Sir John, that is most

true, and it is only in that way that our forces can prosper, *when acting together*.' "

There was a tone and manner about this whole thing which no description can convey. Every word and every look evinced the warmest friendship and the sincerest conviction. They both immediately rose, and the admiral retired to his private cabin, and Sir Charles went out on the quarter-deck, both evidently much affected.

In Sir John Jervis's letter of proceedings he gives ample praise to all who served under him on this expedition, naming them and their exploits individually, and he had a great number of splendid officers with him. He also adds:

" The rapid success of His Majesty's arms has been produced by the high courage and perseverance of his officers, soldiers, and seamen, in the most difficult and most toilsome labours, which nothing short of the perfect unanimity and affection between them and their chiefs could have surmounted."

The *Boyne* arrived at Spithead to be paid off, when, by some accident, she caught fire and was burnt to the water's edge, everything on board her belonging to Sir John Jervis being destroyed. On top of this calamity came a vote of censure, proposed in the House of Commons by Mr. Barham, on the admiral's dealings with the proprietors of estates in the West Indies.

Happily this was defeated, and the House expressed "their cordial sense of the distinguished service of Sir John Jervis and Sir Charles Grey in the conquest of the French islands."

In 1795 Sir John Jervis received the thanks of the Liverpool Corporation for his great services in the West Indies, and the following letter from the Irish House of Commons:

"DUBLIN,
"*January 27th*, 1795.

"SIR,

"I have the honour of transmitting to you, by order of the House of Commons, the enclosed resolution, and I have a sincere satisfaction in being honoured with communicating the gratitude of a generous and gallant nation to such bravery, vigour, and enterprising spirit.

"I have the honour to be, sir,

"Your very obedient servant,

"THE SPEAKER,

"House of Commons of Ireland."

To which Sir John answered:

"LONDON,
"*July 5th*, 1795.

"I am honoured with your letter of January 27th, conveying the unanimous resolution of the House of Commons of Ireland, so highly honourable to myself and to the officers, seamen, and marines I had the good fortune to command in the West Indies, to whose exertions praise is most due. I shall have a great pleasure in communicating this very flattering testimony of the approbation of the House to the parties concerned, more especially as a very considerable part of our success was owing to

the fortitude and very great exertions of their gallant countrymen united with the British.

"May I request of you, sir, to express the gratitude to the House, and to accord my best acknowledgments, for the very obliging manner in which you have communicated those resolutions.

"I have the honour to be, with the highest respect,

"Your most obedient humble servant,

"J. JERVIS."[1]

[1] Brit. Museum MSS., 31,158—, 15 and 16.

CHAPTER VI

THE MEDITERRANEAN COMMAND

1795—1796

"I will tell you what was the course in the happy days of Queen Elizabeth, whom it will be no disreputation to follow: she did vary according to the nature of the employment the quality of the persons she employed; which is a good rule to go by."—Bacon's advice to Sir George Villiers.

SIR JOHN JERVIS had not much time given him to recruit after his illness, and recover from the wear and tear of his work in the West Indies, for the command of the Mediterranean was now under discussion.

The great Admiral Lord Hood had been superseded, as we find by a letter from the Admiralty given in the Appendix. Hotham had come home, the strain of the Mediterranean command having completely broken him down, as can be seen from his letters—for he was only able to sign his name with the greatest difficulty—and Sir Hyde Parker had been left in temporary charge. Politics had a great deal to do with the selection of the commands, and although Lord Hugh Seymour (then at the Admiralty) knew Sir John Jervis to be the man best fitted for the post, he had been so closely associated with the

Whig opposition, who opposed the war, on the ground that it was an attempt to interfere with the internal affairs of another country, that the First Lord evidently feared the Government might decline to give the command of so important a station to a political adversary. In May 1795 he wrote to Lord Spencer:

"I, therefore, cannot help wishing that Sir John Jervis's talents as a sea officer may strike you so forcibly as may lead you to call upon his services in case of Hotham's health obliging him to return to England. I am persuaded that an officer of that calibre only is fit to be entrusted now with the charge of the Mediterranean Fleet, which must fall into the hands of one of our oldest admirals."

And on June 28th he went on to say:

"I regret that Hotham, who was on many accounts so well qualified to command in the Mediterranean, finds himself obliged to solicit his recall; and the same idea makes me most anxious to remind you of Sir John Jervis's powers to fill that station, with advantage to the country and with honour to himself, if the French should really mean to try their force in that part of the world. I am aware of the answer which would be made by many of the Ministry on this occasion. . . . He is certainly an officer of rare merit, and I think that he would do an honour to the minister who avails himself of his talents afloat, or I would not recommend him to you so earnestly."

As a result of these recommendations political expediency, for once, gave way to the public

advantage, and Sir John Jervis was appointed to the command of the Mediterranean.

In November 1795 he hoisted his flag as Admiral of the Blue in the *Lively*, with Captain George Grey as captain of the flagship and Captain Calder as Captain of the Fleet. These two officers went out with him to Gibraltar, where they arrived on November 23rd. The Mediterranean station had been extended to Cadiz, and Rear-Admiral Mann, who was then at Gibraltar with his squadron, was despatched at once to his former station blockading Cadiz. The next day the *Lively* sailed for San Fiorenzo Bay, in Corsica, where she arrived on the 29th. Sir John Jervis now shifted his flag to the *Victory*, and, as the last gun of the salute was fired, the signal was hoisted to "unmoor," and Sir John Jervis commenced his command. He brought with him a system of rigid discipline, a habit of careful attention to the health of the ships' companies, and the art of inspiring activity and emulation in all who served under him.

He was now sixty-one years of age, but extremely able and vigorous, both in mind and body. In the fleet which he took under his command were a number of men who were soon to become famous—Nelson, Troubridge, Collingwood, Hallowell, Fremantle, Hood, Hope, and Cockburn—stars of the first magnitude, although not known yet—as they were to be known, and unknown to their Commander-in-Chief—who was

to be the mainspring of all the movements on the station—yet his discriminating eyes soon appreciated their value. Indeed all the captains on that station speedily realised that they had, as their leader, one who expected much of them, but who was always on the look-out to encourage merit, and to praise it whenever he got a chance, ever ready with sympathy for those who were keen on their work, and eager to help generously any whom he found in distress; but scornful, and almost satirical in manner towards those who he thought were not giving the very best that was in them to the service of the State.

Jervis and Nelson now met for the first time, and were destined to have much influence on one another. Nelson had been longing to get home. He felt worn out, and dissatisfied at being unable to carry out his projects in the absence of help or sympathy; but, on meeting his new Commander-in-Chief, he at once realised the man's power and ability, and wrote to his wife: "Sir John Jervis was a perfect stranger to me; therefore, I feel the more flattered by his attention."

We can imagine what the Commander-in-Chief's outlook was, and what he saw around him as he gathered up the somewhat neglected threads of the work of his station. In France the Directory had by this time decided to abandon *fleet-fighting*, and to enter upon a policy of *commerce-destroying*, directed against exposed

colonies of the enemy, as well as against his trade afloat. Two French squadrons, consisting of seven ships of the line and eight smaller vessels under Richery, were ordered to fit out at Toulon, though there was great difficulty in procuring crews, nearly all Martin's seamen having deserted in disgust at the bad food, scanty clothing, and constant disasters. Richery had succeeded in getting away from Toulon in September with a new crew, whilst Hotham was in San Fiorenzo Bay, and Admiral Mann had been sent in pursuit. On October 7th the French intercepted a convoy from the Levant under the protection of three 74-gun ships. Richery captured one of these, and nearly all the merchant ships, and then anchored in Cadiz, followed by Mann, who blockaded him there. Such had been the first-fruits of the new policy of the Directory, which was to avoid fleet-actions and destroy commerce instead. At very nearly the same time some French frigates captured eighteen merchantmen returning to England from Jamaica. Another squadron from Toulon, under Honoré Gauteaume, captured many merchant ships in the Levant, and then returned to Toulon.

So far, therefore, the new French policy had been successful; but, at the same time, their officers and men lost the art of being seamen, and, as has always happened where the capture of prizes has become the first object, organised piracy demoralised their fleet.

The battle of Loano, so disastrous to the Austrians, had just taken place, and Bonaparte, having left the Directory, was now in the field, determined to defeat the Austrians, to conquer Naples, and recover Corsica, feeding his army on the rich Tuscan country. To do this successfully he must either control the road along the Riviera or make a more hazardous detour inland. Nelson harried him and stood in his way in the former course—though he was unable to prevent supplies reaching the French troops by small craft and neutral vessels, owing to the lack of similar vessels of small draught to intercept them.

But there were other interests to be looked after besides these. The trade passing in and out of the Mediterranean, and to and from the Levant, had to be protected. There was the factory at Smyrna to be guarded, while the Austrians asked for protection in the Adriatic. In addition to these duties, Sir John Jervis had to provide for the victualling and refitting of his squadron, a task in which he was much hampered owing to the sources of supply at Genoa and Leghorn being at first uncertain, and afterwards unavailable. Gibraltar was often badly off, and the supplies which reached him from England frequently fell short of his requirements, and in many cases, when they did arrive, proved to be useless.

Jervis immediately got into communication with the Austrian generals, assuring them of

his readiness to receive their advice, and to support them as far as possible. He arranged with them, and with Sir Gilbert Elliot, the Viceroy of Corsica, that he would establish an efficient blockade of Toulon with the fifteen ships of the line which were there, besides frigates, and that a squadron of light ships should support the allies along the coast. This latter work was to be conducted by Captain Nelson, to whom Sir John offered either the *St. George* (98), or the *Zealous* (74), instead of his old ship the *Agamemnon* (50). Nelson preferred to remain in the ship in which he had done such good service as long as she would last. Among the first letters written by the admiral from the *Victory* we find the following complaints in regard to the supply of stores and ammunition:

"*To Commisioner Inglefield at Gibraltar*

"'VICTORY,'
"*December 6th*, 1795.

"I am much concerned to find the quantity of stores so inadequate to the necessary supply of our ships.

"*To Marquis Cornwallis, Ordnance Store Dept. in England*

"'VICTORY,'
"*December 12th.*

"We are extremely deficient in ammunition and ordnance stores. Especially are we short of powder and cartridges.

THE MEDITERRANEAN OUTLOOK.

"*To the Director of Convoys*

"'VICTORY,'
"*December 12th.*

"I think proper to inform you that the whole coast of Genoa is in the hands of the French."

On December 14th the *Victory* was at sea cruising off Corsica, and remained in those waters for a month of the winter season, while the Commander-in-Chief was drilling his ships and keeping watch. He went into San Fiorenzo Bay on January 14th, but was soon at sea again, and was cruising in the Gulf of Genoa in April, when he wrote home to the Victualling Department: "Unless regular supplies of slops and clothing are sent out, the crews of the fleet will suffer excessively." To such a pitch did the want of clothes and bedding arrive that when the *Ça Ira* was burnt several of her people were taken up naked, and not an article of any kind was in store to furnish them with, until clothing could be obtained from Leghorn.

Admiral Mann was just as short at Cadiz, and Sir John writes to Commissioner Inglefield at Gibraltar that he is sending him clothes from Leghorn by the *Camel.*

He writes again in April to the Navy Board:

"The fleet is in the utmost distress for the want of Hammacoes.[1] I would propose the storeships being ballasted with coals, which are in much demand for the forges."

[1] Hammocks.

Sir John was cruising off the coast in April, and had established a blockade of Toulon. The blockading squadron was disposed in two bodies, the videttes, as he termed the in-shore squadron, being under Captain Troubridge, with Captains Hood and Hallowell under him. These ships were constantly in conflict with the batteries, and scarcely ever more than three miles from the harbour's mouth, while the main body of the fleet cruised outside, threatening the French communications. Nelson wrote home:

"Sir John Jervis has cruised with the fleet in the Gulf of Genoa, close to the shore, where, I venture to say, no fleet ever cruised before. No officer could be more zealous and able to render any service in our profession to England."

At the opening of Bonaparte's campaign all his heavy guns, and artillery outfits of every kind, had to be taken by sea from Nice to Savona. This was done by a flotilla working in-shore, and the British sailing-ships could not stop it, though they did their best to harass the small craft, working in-shore on a difficult coast, with batteries along the shore to protect them.

In March 1796 Bonaparte arrived at Nice to conduct the operations. On April 9th he had formed his headquarters at Savona. On the 10th the Austrian General Beaulieu moved his left wing to form a junction at Savona. Bona-

parte immediately struck in between the right wing of the Austrians and the Sardinian troops, and, after six days' fighting, their armies were separated. He pursued the Sardinians, and, on April 28th, granted them an armistice, with the result that soon after they abandoned the coalition, surrendering the provinces of Savoy and Nice to the French. The Austrians were now left alone, abandoned by their ally on shore, and cut off from the British at sea. On May 18th, after several further successes, Bonaparte entered Milan.

Leaving him at Milan for the present, we must now go back to see what was happening at the seaports. On February 23rd Calder reported:

"There are in Toulon now fourteen French ships of the line, eight frigates, two corvettes, and one brig."

On March 15th Admiral Mann wrote:

"I have arrived off Cadiz. The enemy's squadron appear fit for sea, but the crews are much dissatisfied, and nearly in a state of mutiny. Admiral Richery has to be careful of his person."

On March 27th he wrote to the Admiralty:

"I am sorry to say we are still void of knowledge as to the destination of the French squadron. The situation in the Mediterranean is very different now, for the Commander-in-Chief strongly believes in some movement of moment

against Italy. If M. Richery makes his return there, Sir John Jervis will be in a serious predicament. On this ground it may be necessary to revisit Gibraltar."

Sir John Jervis wrote to the Admiralty, March 28th, 1796:

"Captain Nelson, whose zeal and activity cannot be surpassed, has been constantly employed with his little squadron in the Gulf of Genoa, and will continue there, with an addition of force, which I shall be able to afford him in ten days. I send their lordships Captain Troubridge's account of his proceedings in the Levant, which, I am persuaded, will meet with their lordships' approval, for in the course of my service I do not recollect an instance of greater vigour and despatch; though, from the active intelligence of the enemy, and the torpid state of ours, his judicious conduct was not rewarded with the success it deserved."

Admiral Mann's squadron had been almost constantly in Gibraltar. Captain Craven, the British Agent in San Fiorenzo, had caused much inconvenience by sending all the transports home to England loaded with corn, when some of them should have brought supplies of provisions to the fleet, which was then much in need of them, and on April 28th, 1796, Sir John Jervis wrote to Captain Craven from Toulon, saying:

"Having already deprived the fleet of the means of being supplied with live cattle and

water, I charge you not to add to their distress by diverting any more transports from the service alloted to them."

On May 11th, three days before Napoleon entered Milan, Sir John Jervis wrote to Nelson:

"By the arrival of the *Southampton* yesterday, I received your letters. While I express my approbation of the spirited conduct of the officers and men engaged in the enterprise at Loano, I feel great regret at the accident to Lieutenant Noble; but I trust his country will not be deprived of his services. I have fully answered Mr. Drake on the subject of your proceeding to Naples, where I think you can be of no manner of use. Should, however, Mr. Drake and you, on receiving further information, decide that your presence is necessary, you have my full authority to go by land or sea. You will receive herewith an order to take under your command the Neapolitan flotilla, and directions for the commander thereof to obey your orders.

"When the Neapolitan troops arrive you will, of course, land them on that part of the coast pointed out by Mr. Drake and General Beaulieu. My letters of April 28th will have cleared up all your doubts about the French squadron at Toulon, which now appears to the eye of Captain Troubridge to be in the same state as when I last wrote. From neutral vessels we receive the same accounts you give, of a convoy for Marseilles, with ammunition and stores for the army, and we are keeping a good look-out for them. I have, however, little hope of intercepting them. With respect to the neutral trade under convoy of ships of war, I can have no difficulty in authorising an examina-

tion of them, if they are near an enemy's port, or there is just ground for suspicion that they are destined for one; observing all civility, and attention, prescribed by treaty.

"I am very happy that the fire of your squadron produced so much effect at Loano; it will certainly be the means of retarding the convoy of *munitions de guerre* to the French army, though the total prevention of it cannot be expected."

All this time the fleet was in distress, for though Sir John Jervis exercised the most untiring zeal in keeping it efficient (he had caulked all the ships at sea and done all necessary repairs without going into harbour), the incessant strain of cruising off a stormy coast in the early spring, and the want of fresh provisions, had caused much sickness among the crews. It is open to question how far the policy adopted by the British Admiralty at this time was a wise one. The French were able to keep two British fleets tied to the ports of Toulon and Cadiz, wearing out their officers and men, whilst exercising the greatest economy of their own ships, which were in good repair, and employing only just sufficient men to give the enemy the idea that they were about to put to sea; they were thus doing useful work, in keeping our squadrons fixed there, whilst their privateers preyed on our commerce, especially as their armies could obtain supplies overland, while our ships were finding it difficult to obtain any supplies at all. It must

not be forgotten, however, that all this time our officers and men were learning, through hardships and constant exercises, to keep the seas, and work their ships, a power which afterwards enabled them to meet, on more than equal terms, larger numbers of the enemy, only partially trained. It is none the less true that many of our officers and men succumbed to the hardships they were called upon to endure.

To return to Bonaparte. After entering Milan as a conqueror, his atrocious plunder of Pavia taught the horrified Italians that the occupation of their States by the Republic was not merely for the purpose of planting Trees of Liberty in the market-places. On the contrary, the invasion of Tuscany was undertaken mainly in order to provide food for the French troops, and the weight of the conqueror's vengeance was quick to fall on any who showed a spark of patriotism; for Bonaparte was quite ruthless in carrying out his objects. The victory of Borgetto established the French army on the left bank of the Mincio, and thus the helpless Beaulieu was driven into the Tyrol, there to terminate his ill-judged and disastrous campaign.

While the armies of the Directory were raging through Piedmont and Lombardy, the French fleet was held prisoner in the harbour of Toulon; England thus raised the only obstacle which Europe could then oppose to Bonaparte's triumphant and still wonderful career. "If,"

wrote the young general to the Directory, "the Republic were once master of the Mediterranean, the campaign would speedily terminate; but the presence of the British squadron impedes this." Precisely the same view was taken by Nelson, who wrote to the Duke of Clarence: "If the British admiral should be crippled, the French would be at sea in a week." Happily, the British admiral was not crippled, and the French fleet did not get to sea.

Sir John Jervis described the Toulon station as—

"A wearisome command. Quick decision is more requisite off Toulon than in any other quarter of the globe; without it our squadron will be continuously exposed to disasters, for the gales, which cripple it, are fair for the sailing of the enemy."

For twenty-seven weeks the blockading fleet maintained its station before Toulon, the main body scarcely ever, the videttes never, taking their eyes off the fleet they were ordered to imprison.

There was now a lull in the Austrian movements, and Bonaparte, fearing the overpowering reinforcements which were on their way down the Rhine under the skilful Wurmser, seized the opportunity to follow up in the Italian Courts the moral effect of his victories in the field, in order that, by neutralising them, he

might be left with the single power of Austria to deal with.

The hostility of Genoa had caused much inconvenience to the British fleet, and now they were to lose the friendship of Naples as well. The Queen of Naples did all she could to prevent the Council from giving way, but in vain. She entreated and implored her senseless husband and his cowardly minister to stand firm, but they overruled her advice and craved an armistice. None, however, could be obtained, except on the understanding that the all but powerless detachments of the British fleet were to be denied admittance to Neapolitan ports; and a peace with the Directory soon followed, in which Naples agreed to withdraw her troops from the coalition and her ships and vessels from the British fleet. This decision was as ill-judged as it was cowardly, for at that very moment the French general was writing to his Government: "I see but one means of avoiding defeat in the autumn, and that is to arrange matters so that we shall not be obliged to advance into Southern Italy."[1] The Pope still held out, but when Bonaparte despatched a corps under Augereau into the Papal States, and followed in person, the Pope, finding his territory in danger, and dreading the vengeance which was threatened by the Directory, purchased a peace,[2] by what Sir John

[1] *Corr. de Nap.*, vol. i. p. 465.

[2] Bonaparte s'arrêta dans sa marche sur Rome en signant la

Jervis termed "the spoils of Rome's temple and palaces, and the prostration of the Vatican at the feet of atheists." For an outrage on Tuscany no justifiable causes appeared; but, as Wurmser's daily approach threatened Bonaparte, he brought an absolutely groundless charge of a breach of neutrality by Commodore Nelson and hurriedly arranged with the Tuscans to be allowed to march a column through their territory for the capture of Leghorn.

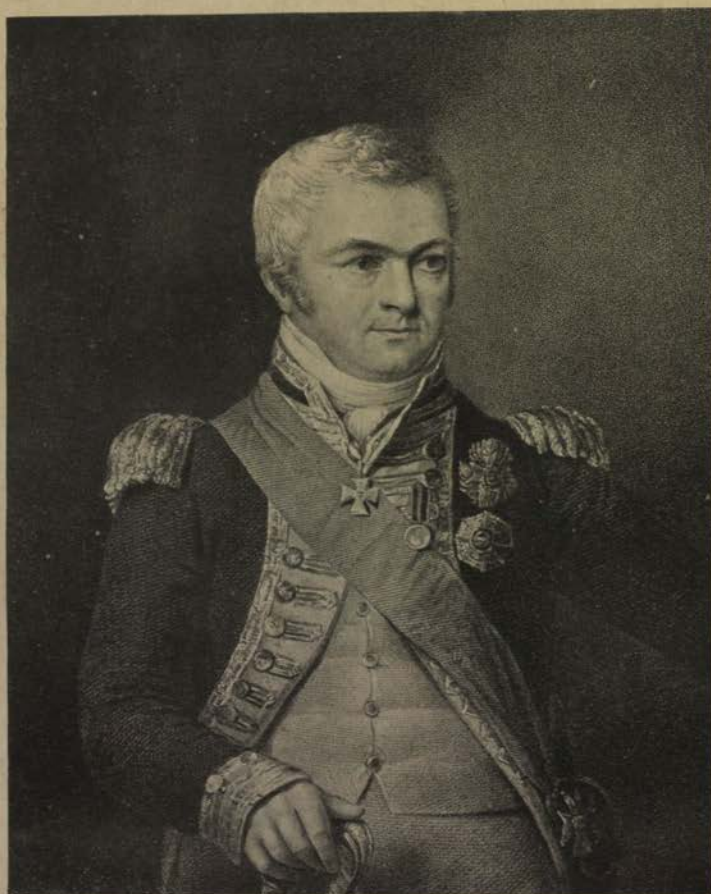
Captain Fremantle, of the *Inconstant*, was there at the time, Commodore Nelson, owing to calms and light winds, not having reached Leghorn roads until the enemy was in possession. No news was received of the impending attack, as the Tuscan Government gave no warning.

Captain Fremantle wrote to Sir John Jervis on June 30th, explaining what had occurred:

"The French arrived at noon on June 27th in Leghorn. All the shipping, nearly all the British property and all the naval stores and

paix de Tolentino, et c'est alors qu'il obtint la cession des superbes monuments des arts qu'on a vus longtemps réunis dans la musée de Paris. La véritable place de ces chefs-d'œuvre était sans doute en Italie, et l'imagination les y regrettait; mais de tous les illustres prisonniers, ce sont ceux auxquels les Français avaient raison d'attacher le plus de prix.

Le général Bonaparte écrivait au Directoire qu'il avait fait de ces monuments une des conditions de la paix avec le pape. "J'ai particulièrement insisté," dit il, "sur les bustes de Junius et de Marcus Brutus, que je veux envoyer à Paris les premiers." Le général Bonaparte, qui depuis a fait ôter ces bustes de la salle du Corps législatif, aurait pu leur épargner la peine du voyage.—DE STAËL, *Considérations sur la Révolution Française*, vol. i. p. 315.



VICE-ADMIRAL SIR THOMAS FRANCIS FREMANTLE, G.C.B.

He was twice wounded when serving with Nelson off Cadiz and Teneriffe. He commanded ships at Copenhagen and Trafalgar, and died as Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean in 1819.

provisions, have been saved, and every English person and *émigré* desirous of leaving Tuscany, have been received on board the ships.

"Considering that no certain accounts were received, that the French were in Tuscany until the 26th, I hope, sir, you will believe that nothing was wanting to accelerate the embarkation."

The following is Jervis's account of the affair, written on June 30th :

"Last night Bonaparte set off with all his cavalry. It was reported that General Beaulieu was reinforced and had marched towards Mantua, and that the troops from that place had joined him. The French troops which arrived at Leghorn were 15,880 men; all but 3,000 are retiring. The first act of the French was to shell the gates. Bonaparte, on his arrival at the Mole battery, told the officer in command there to fire on the English, and on the officer saying he had no orders—he struck him on the breast, and called him a scoundrel. The first order Bonaparte gave was that, if any communication was held with the English shipping in the roads, the people concerned would be shot. The next was that any person who knew of, or had any effects belonging to the English, and did not directly reveal the same, would suffer death. An order was given for every house to deliver up arms, and afterwards they were searched by the French soldiers, who live in the great street and sleep there; and it is ordered to be lighted every night. Not a shop is opened, nor a thing brought to market, but the French help themselves. The Grand-Duke gave a dinner to Bonaparte, after which he asked the Grand-Duke to send an officer to show him the

way to Rome, and that he was going to join his army at Ostera Bianca. On his arrival there, he told the officer he might go back again, and immediately pushed on with his 4,000 cavalry. It is also related that the Governor of Leghorn said: 'I thought you came as friends, but I now find you are enemies, and in that case I wish to go to Florence.' On this Bonaparte called him a Neapolitan scoundrel, a maccaroni-eater, etc., etc. He then said, 'I will send you to Florence'; and he did, but as a prisoner."

On July 5th Sir John Jervis wrote to Evan Nepean, the Secretary of the Admiralty:

"I can safely affirm that the enemy is completely in possession of the whole coast of the Republic, from Voltri to its western extremity, erects batteries, where he thinks His Majesty's ships can be most annoyed, in approaching to, or sailing along the coasts; and never fails to fire upon them, when within reach, and at times when there is no incentive for an hostile intention on our part."

The fall of Leghorn, one of their chief sources of supply, was a great blow to the English fleet. Sir John Jervis writes to the Navy Board from Toulon on July 5th:

"Having represented to the Commissioners of Victualling, on April 26th, the great difficulty of getting fuel, with the heavy consumption in heating the forges for making and repairing all the iron-work of the fleet, and asked that all ships sent out with stores might be ballasted with coals, without receiving any reply to my letter,

I desire you will move the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to give such directions, etc., etc. For, as far as I can see, nothing but distress in fuel will compel me to retire from this position before the winter months."

On July 18th he wrote again to the Admiralty:

"I desire you will acquaint the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that, the moment I was informed of the outrageous conduct of the French General Bonaparte in entering Leghorn I despatched orders to Commodore Nelson to hold the port in the strictest blockade and to co-operate with the Viceroy of Corsica in every measure for the protection of that island, and to prevent as much as possible the enemy from throwing supplies into Corsica, and tampering with the inhabitants, which service, and the enterprise against Porto Ferrajo, their Lordships will perceive by the enclosed letters and other documents from him he has conducted in his wonted manner. Lieutenant Edward Berry, of whom the Commodore writes so highly, is a *protégé* of mine, and I know him to be an officer of talents, great courage, and laudable ambition. It is scarcely necessary for me to point out to their Lordships the importance of Ferrajo."

Now that Leghorn was in the hands of the enemy, and the contagion of revolutionary principles continued to spread, the difficulty of retaining Corsica became more and more apparent, and the fear of the calamities which oppressed Italy daily increased. Sir Gilbert Elliot, the Viceroy, determined, therefore, to seize the

island of Elba in order to secure a depository of stores for the British ships in those waters. Commodore Nelson, being entrusted with the expedition, dashed upon Porto Ferrajo, took the place, and left it in the possession of the British troops under General de Burgh, and at the same time seized the island of Capraja to the north of Elba.

CHAPTER VII

THE MEDITERRANEAN COMMAND (*continued*)

1796—1797

"Responsibility is the test of a man's courage."—ST. VINCENT.

BONAPARTE, whilst pursuing his victories in Italy, was urging the Directory to make every effort against England, and more especially against his great obstacle, the Mediterranean Fleet. The French Government now succeeded in persuading Spain to take active part against England. It therefore became necessary for Sir John Jervis to get together all the ships he could call in to the main body without delay, since, if the Spaniards had appeared in great force, he would have found himself in a difficult position. It was of urgent importance that Admiral Mann should rejoin; but Mann had written to the Admiralty a letter in which he had described himself as an afflicted and unfortunate man who, from disease, felt himself incapable of rendering that service which his grateful wishes for his country prompted him to.

Mann was evidently very ill, and suffering from the effects of the long blockade of Cadiz and the anxiety it had caused him. He was short of

provisions and water, and was daily expecting Richery to put to sea with the French squadron. Moreover, the Spanish admiral, Don Juan de Lángara, with fourteen of the line, was certain to move out if Spain declared war. In one of his letters he mentions that "in Cadiz, seven flags were flying."[1] A fleet of British merchant ships from Smyrna was awaiting convoy at Gibraltar, and the Spaniards were daily expecting a valuable fleet from Buenos Ayres, with five and a half million dollars on board, to arrive at Cadiz.

On June 27th, 1796, we find Mann again writing to the Admiralty, from the *Windsor Castle*, in Gibraltar Bay.

"It gives me much uneasiness to be under the necessity of desiring you to lay before the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty my *very particular request* that they will be pleased to *relieve me from my present command* as soon as possible, and give me permission to return to England for the re-establishment of my health, which is so much impaired that I feel it my duty, both to my sovereign and my country, to urge their lordships' speedy compliance therewith. After a service of forty-one years with fidelity and zeal, I trust it will not be deemed a wish to quit an honourable post for any other reason than what I have stated. For a length of time past I have been afflicted with a bilious complaint which has chiefly been occasioned by excessive anxiety for the service in which I have been employed. It has been increased so much of late as to oblige me to make this appli-

[1] *I.e.*, the flags of seven superior officers.

cation, much against the mind I have ever possessed of doing my duty with honour and reputation; but the infirmities of nature the best intentions cannot resist. It is a man's misfortune, not his fault. When their lordships consider the length of my services, the changes I have gone through, and the difficulty I have had in collecting a worthy set of young people attached to me, I hope they will not add to the anxiety of a mind, already extremely oppressed, by refusing me a ship to take me to England."

It was now quite evident that Spain intended to join France. News came from many sources. On July 20th Walpole wrote from Lisbon to Consul Duff at Cadiz: "Spain means to declare for France, and the old story of Portugal and Gibraltar forms part of the plan." Governor O'Hara, at Gibraltar, wrote on July 19th:

"Orders have already been given by the Spanish Government to fit out as many ships as possible; though, to gain time, they are to endeavour to keep upon terms with us. When war does break out, Portugal is to be attacked, and the siege of Gibraltar undertaken by the forces of Spain and France."

It was on July 20th that Jervis had wisely determined to concentrate all his forces in the Mediterranean, and had sent orders to Mann to rejoin him at once. Before these orders reached him, Mann had already raised the blockade at Cadiz, for he wrote to the Admiralty on July 25th that in view of—

"The apparent co-operation of the French and Spanish fleets at Cadiz, and expecting them almost immediately to put to sea, I judge it necessary, for the safety of the squadron under my command, I should quit this station, and proceed to Gibraltar, where I mean to complete with provisions and water with all possible despatch, and then join the Commander-in-Chief."

At length Admiral Mann arrived, but, to Jervis's great disappointment, without either the provisions or stores which the fleet were in such urgent need of, especially as Genoa and Leghorn were now closed to them and Corsica was becoming unfriendly. Indeed, he was short of provisions himself, having passed Gibraltar without filling up. Jervis at once sent him back to Gibraltar to fill up with all he could stow and with orders to rejoin at once. In the meantime, on August 5th, Richery had sailed from Cadiz on an expedition to Newfoundland, escorted to sea by the Spanish fleet under Don Juan de Lángara. On arrival in Newfoundland Richery burnt 100 English merchant-ships, and harassed the fishing interests, after which he proceeded to Brest in time to join the expedition to Ireland under Hoche, which, fortunately for us, proved so disastrous for the French. Lángara, after seeing Richery well out to sea, and clear of Cadiz, sailed for Toulon with nineteen ships of the line. On his way there he encountered Admiral Mann, and, on October 1st, chased him into Gibraltar. Mann filled up with provisions

and stores, but did not sail. In fact, he never did rejoin. His reason for abandoning his chief at this important time must be gathered from his letters.[1]

We must now return to Sir John Jervis, who was still cruising off Toulon, and keeping up the blockade of the port. We find him writing home to complain of the French commissioners, who throughout the Riviera of Genoa, and in the county of Nice, made a constant practice of selling to the crimps employed to recruit for the Spanish army all the Austrian prisoners who fell into their hands. Commodore Nelson took nearly 150 Grenadiers out of a Genoese vessel who had been taken prisoners in the last affair of General Beaulieu.

"They are now in the fleet, borne as supernumaries for wages, in order to enable the captains to clothe them, for they were stripped by the enemy, and had only a few clothes to cover their nakedness. I have informed the Austrian general, and also the Marquis of Bute of this horrible traffic."

On August 10th Jervis wrote to the Navy Board, pointing out that—

"The wear and tear and loss of boats in clearing transports and victuallers at sea is incalculable. We are now in our eighteenth week's cruise, and if the enemy does not give us battle, from the nature of the war, I must obstinately persevere in maintaining this position until the

[1] See Appendix.

armies on both sides go into winter quarters. I can only, therefore, say generally to a well-informed Navy Board that we need a great supply of nails, elm and oak board, leather and lead; but, above all, we are in greatest distress for sewing twine, our only resources being in drawing threads from new canvas, or in converting the breeches and tackles in the great cabins of the three-decked ships into white oakum and spinning it into twine. We desire credit, though we have not found it, from a Board where, in former times, much narrowness of principle obtained, but which, in this more enlightened age, we conceived, liberality of sentiment would have produced praise for our industry, resources, and frugality. It is the duty of your two commissioners to enter into details, mine to give you general heads. I, therefore, trust I shall not be expected to enter into minutes of stores necessary for the fleet which I have the honour to command. The extinction of the rope manufactory at Ajaccio has prompted me to send Commissioner Coffin to Naples, with letters, etc. I hope he will be able to purchase 200 tons of much better cordage than you can manufacture in England."

The three following letters, written on board the *Victory* off Toulon on August 19th, 1796, show how anxious Jervis was to concentrate all his forces, now that the Spaniards had appeared in force in the Mediterranean. It was becoming clear that our much smaller fleet, though in a very much higher state of discipline and efficiency as a fighting force, could not remain any longer exposed to the much larger fleet that was con-

centrating against it, especially as we now had no base for supplies nearer than Gibraltar.

"From the enclosed intelligence, not a moment is to be lost in concentrating my force. I therefore desire you will despatch the *Captain* and *Diadem* to me as soon as possible, if you have not already done it. The retreat of Admiral Mann so many days before the combined fleet sailed puzzles me.

"J. JERVIS.

"COMMODORE NELSON."

"You will perceive, by the enclosed, the necessity of your joining me with the utmost despatch. I flatter myself you will have left San Fiorenzo before this reaches; if not, you will, I am sure, 'clap wings' to your *Barfleur*.

"CAPTAIN DACRES."

"Rear-Admiral Mann's squadron having arrived here very short of provisions and water, I desire you will send the provisions and slops you have in store at San Fiorenzo, except a reserve for seven or eight frigates under Commodore Nelson.

"DAVID HEATLY, Esq.,
"Agent at San Fiorenzo."

Jervis's position at this time was undoubtedly a critical one. He was threatened not only by a hostile force, superior in numbers, but by hunger, disease, want of clothes, and of all the necessaries of life as well. He had been compelled to repair his ships at sea, in a make-shift

way, with such material as he could obtain, however unsuitable, with the result that many of them were in anything but a seaworthy condition. On August 25th we find him writing to Commissioner Inglefield at Gibraltar:

"The French are triumphant on shore everywhere, and Wurmser must act on a bad defensive for the rest of the campaign. Alas! *Bella Italia!*"

To the Victualling Board he wrote, at the same date:

"In consultation with the physicians of the fleet, and owing to want of fresh meat from Leghorn Bay, now closed to us, the next best antiscorbutics are lemons and onions, which I have ordered from Barcelona. No price is too great to preserve the health of the fleet."

Jervis also wrote to the Navy Board about the state of some of the ships, which, he says—

"Are a complete sieve, from the poop to the orlop deck, both in the decks and the sides; repaired as they are with planks of Pomeranian and Holstein growth, the water runs through them like a porous dripping-stone."

We will now leave this part of the Mediterranean, and take a wider view of England's position at this time. The fear of invasion inspired by the concentration of forces at Brest made the British Government decide to give

up Corsica, abandon the Mediterranean, and station the fleet between Gibraltar and Brest so as to hinder the Spanish fleet from co-operating with the French; accordingly, while Jervis was in the act of writing the above letters, he received orders to evacuate Corsica. The main body of the fleet immediately set sail for San Fiorenzo Bay, and on September 25th Nelson had raised the blockade at Leghorn and repaired to Corsica, arriving on October 8th.

On October 19th General Gentile left Leghorn with a French expedition and crossed over to Corsica. The British fleet, on its arrival, at once began to dismantle the batteries around San Fiorenzo Bay. Rain was coming down in torrents, and the guns made deep ruts in the ground, but the men continued this heavy work without a murmur, until the enemy suddenly appeared in the bay, when all the guns that could not be saved were spiked and thrown into the ditches.

Nelson was now at Bastia, the task of evacuating that place having been entrusted to him. General Gentile had lost no time in disseminating revolutionary principles amongst the Corsicans, and every man of them was now an enemy. They had been told of the successes of the French in Italy, and deemed the British to be a beaten and retiring force. Systematic government there was none, and the whole island was at the mercy of a lawless population supplied

with arms by the French. Still, in spite of all this, the evacuation was carried out successfully. Troubridge, with his in-shore squadron at Toulon, had been ordered to rejoin the flag, and had now come back one week after the departure of the admiral. The Levant trade, which had been ordered to rendezvous at San Fiorenzo, was all assembled there, and Jervis now waited only for Mann to rejoin him. Captain Collingwood says:

"We waited with the utmost impatience for Admiral Mann, whose junction seemed at one time absolutely necessary to our safety. We were all eyes, looking westward from the mountain-tops; but we looked in vain. The Spanish fleet, nearly double our number, was cruising almost in view, and our reconnoitring frigates sometimes got among them, while we expected them hourly to be joined by the French fleet. But no Admiral Mann appeared."

Nelson, having shipped the last of the troops from Bastia, took the Viceroy on board and retired to Elba, which it was intended to hold. Although everything had been ready for a fortnight, Jervis held on to the last moment, hoping that Mann would join him, and fearing, if he left the port, Mann might appear and find him gone.

By November 2nd provisions had run so short that it was impossible to delay any longer, and the admiral, having no choice, made sail

with his whole fleet, and proceeded to the westward. The Mediterranean was thus practically abandoned, by order of the home Government. They failed to recognise the true value of the force which they possessed in those seas. Although outnumbered by the combined units of the enemy, Sir John knew their value, and also knew that "it is men, and not ships," that win a battle. He was confident in the fighting power of his own squadron, and, had Mann appeared, he fully intended to have brought on an action with the Spanish fleet. Now, where was Mann? He received his orders from Jervis by the cutter *Fox*; he also had the same orders given him by Captain Curzon, of the *Pallas*, who had been chased by the Spaniards on the way down, and his failure to comply with them seems incomprehensible, except on the ground of his ill-health, which may possibly have been aggravated by his late experience of being chased into Gibraltar. It is impossible to account for his behaviour on any other hypothesis. He seems to have created a picture in his own mind of all the difficulties that could be imagined. He seems to have believed that it was impossible to reach the Commander-in-Chief; that the Commander-in-Chief was ignorant of the forces approaching him, and that he would try to escape them and be forced into an action, in which he would be beaten. He wrote a long letter to the Admiralty detailing

all these melancholy circumstances and the gloomy images which filled his mind, and eventually proceeded home. The Admiralty tried to stop him, but their orders failed to reach him. On his arrival in England he was reprimanded, and for a time nothing more was heard of him till he reappeared as a member of the Admiralty Board. It is evident, from the letter I have quoted,[1] that he was so ill that he must have lost all nerve, and become quite incompetent for any service at that time.

Having gone so far out of our way to trace the reasons and circumstances which induced Mann to abandon his chief in the hour of need, we must now return to Sir John Jervis.

On leaving San Fiorenzo he sent for the master of the *Victory*, Mr. Jackson, and told him that, as he had not the least hope of being reinforced, he had made up his mind to proceed to Gibraltar with all possible despatch. He felt certain the enemy were aware how very short his fleet was of provisions and had, therefore, given it out to a person whom he knew to be, in reality, a spy of the enemy, that he should run for Cagliari to victual, and he doubted not but they supposed such to be his real intention. "So now, Jackson," he went on, "we must hie to twelve or fourteen leagues north of Minorca and then strain every nerve, night and day, to get to Gibraltar."

[1] See page 132 and Appendix.

We can hardly do better than continue the account of what followed from Jackson's journal:

"On November 4th, thirteen sail of men-of-war, each took a vessel in tow. We had then an easterly wind, when it suddenly changed to the westward, and blew hard in squalls, varying several points, which obliged us to tack or wear frequently. This displeased Captain Calder. Whenever I proposed to put the fleet on the other tack he would say: 'You will tear both the ships and the people in pieces; where is the use of it? Where are you going to? Is it to look for the enemy?' Sir John heard him one night, and, after the fleet were all about on the other tack, he sent for me and said, 'I heard Captain Calder, very angry at your disturbing him, but in future you will call me first, and I shall desire him to do what you wish.' On the 10th the *Britannia* was taken aback, and in her stern-way she sank her vessel in tow; and on the 12th the vessel in tow of the *Culloden* sank by the pressure of sail carried. The *Excellent* and *Captain* carried away a lower mast, and other ships lost yards and topmasts."

By this ruse of the admiral's the hostile fleets were decoyed away, and successfully eluded; but the passage was terribly prolonged, owing to the stormy head-winds, and the allowance of food diminished daily, till three men were obliged to subsist on the rations of one, and even then the bread which was served out was so full of weevil as to be little better than dust. All this told so much on the crews that "it was heart-breaking to see it, and to hear the

complaints." At last the fleet reached Gibraltar and moored in a crescent in Rosia Bay on December 1st, and the ships were at once victualled and put upon full allowance. But their misfortunes were not yet over, for, a few days after their arrival at Gibraltar, a perfect hurricane set in, which carried the *Courageous* out of the bay and wrecked her on the coast of Morocco. The *Zealous* and *Gibraltar* dragged their anchors and got to sea, and, though they passed safely through the Straits, they were so much damaged that it was found necessary to heave the one down for repairs, whilst the other had to be sent to England.

The combination of unwearying patience and high efficiency displayed by Sir John Jervis in a difficult and disheartening command had not escaped the Government. It would be hard to imagine a position presenting greater obstacles, or offering less encouragement, than that with which he had been called upon to deal. A campaign which opened with the fairest prospects of success had gloomily closed in mortification and defeat. Instead of gathering laurels for his zealous fleet, Jervis had been forced into a humiliating retreat with famished crews. But, though his labours during this time of trial ended in a purely negative result, there is one thing which we cannot refuse to put down to his credit: the work that he did was *very well done.* The Government fully appreciated

his services, and admired him for the qualities he had displayed. They had seen that, when prospects grew dark and difficulties and discouragements increased, his nerve and self-possession had never failed him, and that he had shown such character and resourcefulness in emergencies as augured well for the career which yet awaited him. Not only had he managed his fleet with exemplary economy, but—what was far more important—he had brought it into a state of discipline, efficiency, and order such as had never before been rivalled. On this point the testimony of Nelson is conclusive:

"We are preparing to leave the Mediterranean, a measure of which I cannot approve. They at home do not know what this fleet is capable of performing; anything and everything . . . of all the fleets I ever saw, I never saw one, in point of officers and men, equal to Sir John Jervis's, who is a commander able to lead them to glory."

On February 1st, 1797, Lord Spencer wrote to Sir John Jervis the following letter:

"The great exertions, ability, and zeal which you have displayed during your command in the Mediterranean, not only in the active operation of the fleet under your orders, but in the internal arrangements and discipline which you have established and maintained, with such effect to His Majesty's service, have been noticed by His Majesty, with so much approbation, that he has

been graciously pleased to declare his intentions of honouring you by a distinguished mark of his royal favour. I am accordingly commanded to acquaint you that His Majesty will confer on you the dignity of a Peer of Great Britain, as soon as it shall be known what title you should desire to bear. I hope it will be needless for me to use many words for the purpose of assuring you with what real sincerity I take this opportunity of congratulating you on the very honourable distinction which they so deservedly convey.

"I have, etc.,

"SPENCER."

This letter did not reach Sir John Jervis till some time afterwards. Meantime, the Directory in France, encouraged by Bonaparte's success, and relying on the Spanish alliance and the promises of the disaffected Irish, had determined to despatch an expedition to Ireland. Admiral Villeneuve, with five ships, left Toulon accompanied by twenty-six Spanish ships which had been lying in that port.

On December 6th Lángara, with his fleet, entered Cartagena, and Villeneuve sailed to the west, passing Gibraltar on December 10th, in full sight of the British fleet, and driving before the same easterly gale that had done so much to damage the British squadron. On December 15th Nelson was despatched to Porto Ferrajo to conduct the evacuation, which was to complete our abandonment of the Mediterranean for the time.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ABANDONMENT OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

1796—1797

THERE can be no doubt that, at the time of Sir John Jervis's retreat to Gibraltar, the British Government was in an uncertain and vacillating state of mind, for while he was still on his way there orders were sent from England countermanding the evacuation of the Mediterranean. This changeful policy was due, in the first place, to the news that the English Government had received of Bonaparte's successes at Lonato and Castiglione, further influenced by the pessimistic letters of Mann and O'Hara. The Government had also failed properly to appreciate the character and discipline of Jervis's fleet, and the fact that he was fully capable of resisting the much larger, though morally inferior, forces opposed to him, and was quite ready and willing to hold out. As the Viceroy of Corsica said: "Jervis is as firm as a rock. If Mann joins him they will certainly fight, and they all seem confident of victory."

The orders to abandon the Mediterranean were dated August 31st. The countermanding orders

of October 21st were due to the fact that Wurmser had eluded Bonaparte and entered Mantua; whilst Mantua was held, Bonaparte could advance no farther, and Austria was gathering a new army in the Tyrol.

It being feared that an attack was meditated on Lisbon, Jervis was ordered to the Tagus. He duly arrived there, but misfortune still attended the squadron, for the *Bombay Castle* ran on shore and was wrecked. Sir Charles Knowles was tried for her loss, but was acquitted, the evidence at the court-martial tending to prove that the bottom of the river had shifted in the strong freshets, and that the anchors would not hold. The fleet remained in the Tagus till January 18th, 1797, when, the admiral having filled up with stores and provisions, and given a week to the squadron in which to refit, he wrote to the Admiralty reporting that they were going to sea, and adding, "Inactivity in the Tagus will make cowards of us all." As the squadron was leaving, the *St. George* ran aground about three-quarters of a mile from the Bogue Fort, and was only saved owing to the promptitude of Admiral Vanstabel. He was on his way out to Halifax in the *St. Albans*, and, happening to be above Belem Castle at the time, went down at once to her assistance, and, anchoring abreast of her, sent a cable on board, by which means she was hove off the shore and the *St. Albans* towed her safely up to the dockyard. If it had not

been for this timely help she must inevitably have become a total wreck. The rest of the fleet was now at sea, but numbered only eight ships of the line, owing to the various accidents I have mentioned. On February 6th a reinforcement of six sail of the line, under Rear-Admiral Sir William Parker, joined the fleet to replace Admiral Mann's squadron. On the following day the *Culloden* also joined, so that the total force under Sir John Jervis now consisted of the following ships:

	Guns.	
Victory	100	Admiral Sir J. Jervis. 1st Capt. R. Calder. Capt. George Grey.
Britannia	100	Vice-Admiral Thompson. Capt. T. Foley.
Barfleur	98	Vice-Admiral Hon. W. Waldegrave. Capt. J. R. Dacres.
Prince George	98	Rear-Admiral William Parker. Capt. T. Irwin.
Blenheim	90	Capt. T. L. Frederick.
Namur	90	Capt. J. H. Whitshed.
Captain	74	Capt. R. W. Miller.
Irresistible	74	Capt. Geo. Martin.
Goliath	74	Capt. Sir C. H. Knowles, Bart.
Excellent	74	Capt. Cuthbert Collingwood.
Egmont	74	Capt. J. Sutton.
Orion	74	Capt. Sir J. Saumarez.
Colossus	74	Capt. George Murray.
Culloden	74	Capt. Thomas Troubridge.
Diadem	64	Capt. G. H. Towry.

Nelson had been sent up the Mediterranean by Sir John Jervis. He sailed from Gibraltar on December 16th to withdraw the garrison from Elba, and on the 20th he fought a severe

action with two Spanish frigates, and succeeded in capturing them. His prizes were immediately afterwards recovered by a Spanish squadron of line-of-battle ships, which bore down upon him; but his own frigates escaped. On December 26th he reached Porto Ferrajo, and there he was joined by Elliot, the late Viceroy of Corsica, who had been in Naples, since Corsica had been evacuated. General de Burgh, commanding the garrison in Elba, refused to abandon his post without specific orders from the Government at home, and, as Nelson had no orders other than those of the admiral, he embarked the naval stores only. With these, and all his squadron, he sailed for Gibraltar, arriving there on February 9th.

Jervis never had his friend out of his thoughts, and was determined, if possible, to give him all the assistance in his power, as will be seen from the following letter, written to Nelson from the Tagus before sailing on January 13th:

"SIR,

"Our entry into the Tagus was clouded with the loss of the *Bombay Castle* on the South Catchup, ascribed to the ignorance of the pilot and other unfortunate circumstances. The *Zealous* was so much injured by the stroke she got on the reef of Cape Malabata, and the *Gibraltar* by the shock she got on the Pearl rock that they had to be ordered to England, and the *St. George* had to shift her mainmast, so that I was not a little animated on receiving

news from Admiral Colpoys, by Captain Cole of the *Révolutionnaire*, on the 8th, that Richery sailed from Brest on the 16th with eighteen ships of the line and twenty-four frigates, crammed with troops, and was to all appearance destined for Portugal; Sir Edward Pellew having parted with him, to the westward of the Saintes, steering S.W. I immediately proposed to the minister [Walpole] that the Portuguese ships destined for Brazil should be added to my force, and that I would put to sea, and face Richery, and through the vigour of Don Rodrigo de Souza de Coutino, the Minister of Marine, this measure was adopted the following day, and three other line-of-battle ships ordered to be got ready, making eight of the line and four frigates; with which I should have sailed this day (January 13th), had not I received intelligence from the Admiralty in intermediate time. I am impatient for the arrival of Rear-Admiral William Parker with the reinforcements, for the moment they are put to rights I will proceed to the Straits mouth, in order to cover you, and, in case of the Spanish fleet taking a position to the east of Gibraltar, it is my intention to enter the Mediterranean. I cannot express to you and Captain Cockburn the feelings I underwent on the receipt of the enclosed bulletin—the truth of which I cannot doubt—of your glorious achievement in the capture of the *Sabina*, and dignified retreat from the line-of-battle ships, which deprived you of your well-earned trophy. Your laurels were not then within their grasp, but can never fade. This event appears to me the more unfortunate because Bowen, after dismasting and capturing the French frigate *La Vestale*, was prevented by a sudden gale of wind from putting a sufficient number of men on board her to awe the prisoners,

who rose upon the lieutenant and boat's crew in the night and carried the ship into Cadiz, the second captain and a few men only having been removed to the *Terpsichore*, the first captain and an incredible number of men having been killed and wounded in the action, with little loss on the part of the *Terpsichore*, as related by the lieutenant, now a prisoner at Cadiz (for I have as yet received no account from Bowen). I fear all Richery's ships have got back to Brest. Colpoys fell in with seven of them, but they were to windward of him, and escaped in thick blowy weather, by which he was afterwards forced up Channel and Lord Bridport prevented from getting down to take up his position to intercept them.

"All here send you their best wishes. Remember me kindly to Sir Gilbert Elliot. This letter is intended for you both. Say everything proper to General De Burgh, and to all the officers, by land and sea, I have the honour to be known to, particularly Cockburn.

"J. JERVIS."

The day after this letter to Nelson was written we find Jervis warmly congratulating Bowen on the capture of *La Vestale* in the following characteristic letter:

"SIR,

"I have received with a degree of exalted pride, which I have not words to express, your relation of the gallant action and capture of the French Republican frigate, *La Vestale*, by His Majesty's ship under your command, and I desire you will accept my best thanks for your distinguished conduct upon the occasion;

and that you will take an early opportunity to convey them to your brave officers and crew.

"CAPTAIN BOWEN,
"'*Terpsichore*.'"

On the same date, January 24th, the admiral wrote to Sir William Parker:

"I am in hourly expectation of accounts from Commodore Nelson of his retreat down the Mediterranean, with the frigates under his command, accompanied by the transports and stores-ships with the garrison of Porto Ferrajo and the artillery retired from Corsica. It is absolutely necessary for me to take a position to go speedily to his assistance, in case the fleet of Spain should attempt to interrupt his passage. I have therefore determined to proceed to Cape St. Vincent, and to cruise from five to fifteen leagues south of it, until joined by the reinforcements under your command. After seeing the victuallers and trade over the bar, I desire you will make the best of your way to join me.

"J. JERVIS.

"REAR-ADMIRAL SIR WILLIAM PARKER."

The fleet remained at sea, cruising from January 18th onwards, and on February 12th Jervis wrote to the Hon. Robert Walpole:

"The *Southampton* passed very near the Spanish fleet the day before yesterday, and I am using every means in my power to fall in with it. The wind is at present directly in our teeth, but we may reasonably look for a change soon."

On the next day, February 13th, Jervis wrote to Governor O'Hara :

"I am in quest of the Spanish fleet, which cannot be at a great distance. It was last seen on the 11th February—seventeen leagues to the S.E. of C. St. Vincent.

"J. JERVIS."

On February 13th Nelson in the *Minerva*, with Sir Gilbert Elliot and his staff on board, fell in with the *Lively* Captain Lord Garlies, a look-out of Jervis's squadron, and soon after they came up with the British fleet and repaired on board the *Victory*. When they had made their report the Viceroy and his staff went on board the *Lively*, and became witnesses of the action. Nelson went back to resume the command of the *Captain*. His information in regard to the strength of the Spanish fleet having been confirmed, Sir John at once made up his mind to bring them to action. No sooner was this decision taken than he announced it by signal to the squadron. The *Bonne Citoyenne* (Captain Lindsay) now came up, with the news that the Spanish fleet was not far distant. This fleet, commanded by Don José de Cordova, and consisting of twenty-seven sail of the line, of which thirteen were three-deckers, and fourteen frigates, was on its way to join the French fleet at Brest, and Sir John Jervis saw the vital importance of preventing this combination of forces against England from taking place. The

numbers of the enemy did not daunt him. He knew the splendid condition of his own squadron and the courage and ability of his captains, and he was about to prove the value of that constant training in gunnery which he had always insisted on in his command. We may be quite sure that he was also well informed as to the state of the Spanish ships and able to estimate their fighting value accordingly. Don José de Mazzaredo had refused to take command, unless the Spanish Government consented not to commission more ships than they could man; Spain built ships, but had no money to spare for the training of their crews. Neglect or failure to pay and feed the men had rendered the service odious. Sir John Jervis was fully aware of its weakness. He also knew that the narrow escape from an invasion of Ireland[1] by the forces under Hoche had shaken the nerves of England. The discontent that was now seething in the English Navy and was soon about to break out into mutiny at home was also not unknown to him.

A weak man would have looked at numbers

[1] In October 1796 Wolfe Tone, the Irish politician and rebel, was in Paris plotting against England, by arranging with the Directory that the Spanish and French fleets should meet in Brest, and, with the help of the Dutch, should make a landing in Ireland. He also had emissaries on board the English ships to stir up mutiny. He says in his journal: "Where are those d—d Spanish ships? Why are they not in Brest waters?" Sir John Jervis defeated all his plans, and saved England by preventing the junction of the fleets and defeating the machinations of the emissaries.

only and allowed caution to prevail, but he knew how all-important it was for England that Cordova should not reach Brest. He therefore was determined to give battle at all costs, no matter how many ships the Spaniards might bring against him.

On the day before the battle Sir John gave a dinner-party on board the *Victory*, at which Lord Garlies, Sir George Elliot, and Captain Hallowell (a passenger) were present. Before rising from the table the following toast was drunk: "Victory over the Dons, in the battle from which they cannot escape to-morrow." It is believed that Jervis did not go to bed that night, and it is quite certain that he made his will.

In the course of the first and middle watch the enemy's signal-guns were distinctly heard, and, as he noticed them sounding nearer and nearer, Sir John made particular inquiries as to the compact order and station of the squadron, in as far as they could be seen in the darkness. Long before daybreak he paced the deck in even more than his usual stern silence. When the grey of the morning of the 14th enabled him to discern his fleet, he announced his high approbation of the captains, for their "admirable close order," and wished they were now well up with the enemy, for he had every confidence in his force. That he was not, even at this moment, unmindful of the great national interests at stake is shown by his remark that

"A victory is very essential to England at this moment."

The morning was foggy, and, as the mist lifted in the distance, first the *Lively* and then the *Niger* signalled "A strange fleet." The *Bonne Citoyenne* was ordered to reconnoitre, but very soon after the *Culloden's* signal-guns announced the enemy. At 9.20 the signal to chase was made to the *Culloden*, *Blenheim*, and *Prince George*, and, shortly after, to the *Irresistible*, *Orion*, and *Colossus*. The Commander-in-Chief still walked the quarter-deck, and, as the hostile numbers were counted, they were duly reported to him by the captain of the fleet:

"There are eight sail of the line, Sir John!" "Very well, sir!"

"There are twenty sail of the line, Sir John." "Very well, sir!"

"There are twenty-five sail of the line, Sir John." "Very well, sir!"

"There are twenty-seven of the line, Sir John," this statement being followed by a remark on the great disparity of the forces.

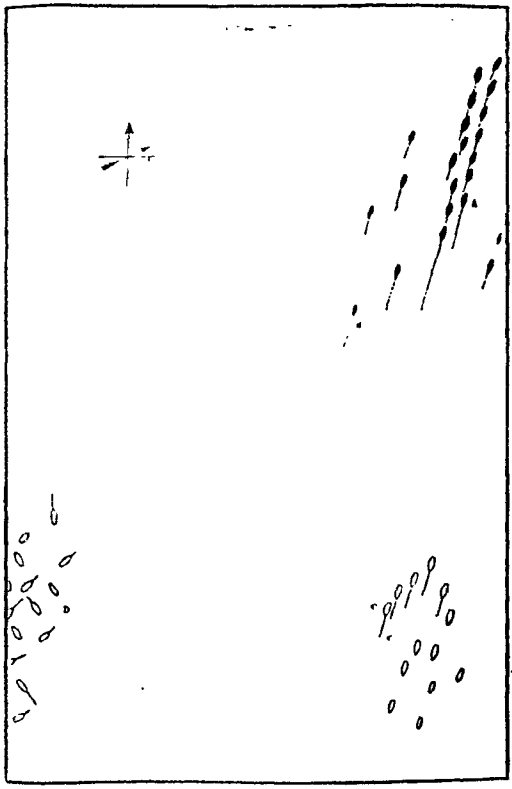
To which he replied: "Enough, sir! the die is cast, and if there are fifty sail I will go through them!" This sharp and decisive answer produced silence, and Captain Hallowell, who was walking with Sir John, could not refrain from clapping him on the back, and saying: "That's right, Sir John, that's right. By God, we shall give them a d—d good licking."

At 10.40 Sir John made the signal for "Line ahead astern of the *Victory*," steering S.S.W. (Plate I.) as most convenient. The fog was now clearing, and when it was gone each of the hostile fleets could see distinctly the order and position of the other. Whilst the British squadron was in closest order, the Spanish fleet stretched in two straggling bodies across the horizon with an open space between them. Such an opportunity of cutting off part of their force was not to be lost, and at 11.30 Sir John made signal to pass through the enemy's line and engage them to windward (Plate II.) He had the choice of either attacking the eighteen weather-ships, or the eight ships to leeward, but, with quick and accurate judgment, he decided to assail the main body, because the smaller body, having to head to windward, would be more easily kept out of action.

The British squadron was then ordered to form in the following order: *Culloden, Blenheim, Prince George, Orion, Colossus, Victory, Irresistible, Barfleur.* The British van had by now approached the enemy.

The distinction of leading the British line into action fell to the lot of the *Culloden* (Captain Troubridge), and at 11.30 she opened fire as she came abreast of the leading ships to windward. The course she was steering led the *Culloden* (Plate III.) not exactly through the gap in the enemy's line, but towards two three-decked

PLATE I



SHOWING THE POSITIONS OF THE BRITISH AND SPANISH FLEETS WHEN SEVERAL OF THE SPANISH FLEET WERE FIRST DISCOVERED BY THE BRITISH.

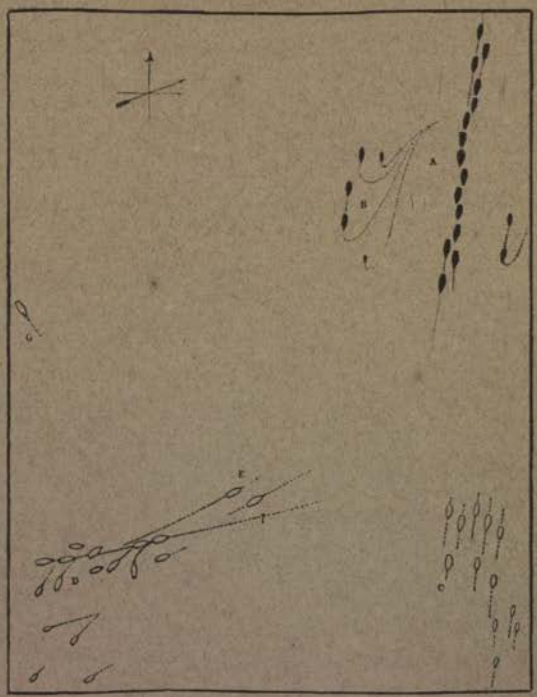
A. British fleet in the order of sailing in two divisions.

B. *La Bonne Citoyenne*, sloop of war, Captain Lindsay. Look-out ship.

C. Several Spanish ships and frigates, first discovered by the British fleet.

D. Supposed position of the main body of the Spanish fleet obscured by the thick mist and haze.

PLATE II



SHOWING THE POSITIONS OF THE FLEETS AT 11.30 A.M.

A. The British fleet in line-of-battle as most convenient advancing to cut off the Spanish ships that were separated from their main body.

B. British frigates bearing up to pass to leeward of their fleet.

C. Several Spanish line-of-battle ships and frigates separated from their main body and standing away on the starboard tack.

D. The main body of the Spanish fleet bearing down in a confused manner to support their ships to leeward.

E. Two Spanish line-of-battle ships advanced to reconnoitre the British fleet.

G. A Spanish frigate joining the Spanish fleet.

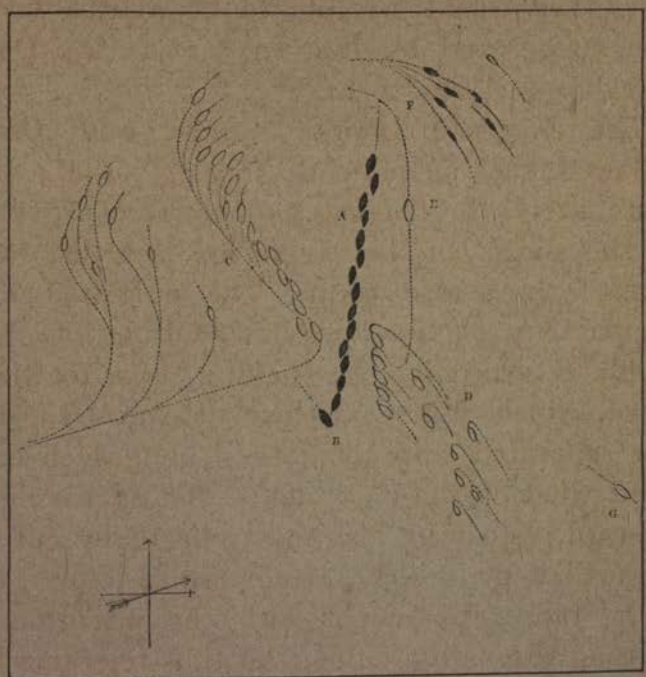
ships now the last of the hostile weather division and directly on board one of them. Griffiths, the first lieutenant, reported this fact to Captain Troubridge, and pointed out that a collision seemed inevitable. Troubridge replied, "Can't help it, Griffiths. Let the weakest fend off." The *Culloden* stood on till her crew could see through the ports of one of the three-deckers, whose guns were pointed and ready to be fired. But two of the *Culloden's* double-shotted broadsides told with such effect, and threw the Spaniards into such confusion, that she went about, and her guns on the other side not having been even cast loose, she did not fire a single shot, and the *Culloden* triumphantly passed through. The moment she had done so the Commander-in-Chief made the signal, "Tack in succession." At the instant the admiral's signal flew the reply fluttered out at the *Culloden's* mast-head, and her sails were already shaking as she luffed up into the wind, for, having anticipated the order, the answering flag was hoisted already at the mast-head, with a stop round it, as was the custom of the fleet. "Break the stop! Down with the helm!" cried out Troubridge as he saw the signal. Sir John Jervis was delighted at this promptitude in executing the manœuvre he had ordered.

"Look!" he cried to Jackson, the master. "Look at Troubridge there! He tacks his ship in battle as if the eyes of all England were

upon him, and would to God they were! for then they would see him to be what I know him to be, and by Heaven, sir! as the Dons will soon feel him to be."

The *Blenheim*, *Prince George*, and *Orion* followed, tacking perfectly in close order; unfortunately, the *Colossus* had her foreyard shot in the slings, as she ranged up and her foretopsail yard also went. The animated and regular fire of the British squadron was but feebly returned by the enemy's ships to windward, which, failing in their attempts to join the separated ships, had been obliged to haul their wind on the port tack. The Spaniards to leeward, who were also most effectually cut off from their main body, attempted to join on the port tack, apparently with the intention of passing through our line, and thus rejoining the main portion of their fleet. But the warm reception they met with from the centre ships of our line soon obliged them to put about, and, with the exception of the Spanish line-of-battle ship E. (Plate III.), they wore round and sought safety in flight, nor did they appear again till towards the evening, near the close of the action. They had been led by a vice-admiral in the *Principe d'Asturias*, of 112 guns. She was on the point of closing with the *Victory*, and had ranged up to within pistol-shot of her, as she was tacking into her station, when Sir John Jervis backed his maintopsail to face his

PLATE III



SHOWING THE POSITIONS OF THE BRITISH AND SPANISH FLEETS A LITTLE AFTER NOON.

A. British fleet passing through the enemy's line

B. *Culloden* tacking by signal to engage the enemy's line to windward.

C. Main body of the enemy's fleet, which, after passing the British fleet, bore up with an apparent design of joining their ships to leeward.

D. Spanish ships cut off from the main body, attempting to join the rest of the fleet, but forced to weer and sheer off by the superior force of the British fire.

E. A Spanish line-of-battle ship which succeeded in joining the main body, by passing to the rear of the British fleet.

F. The British frigates exchanging fire with the Spanish two-decker.

G. One of the Spanish ships of the line which set all sail and disappeared.

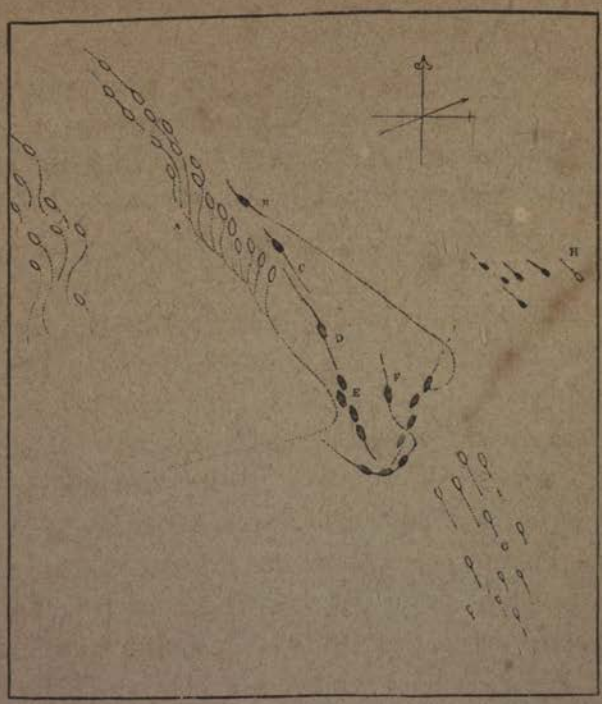
antagonist. So panic-struck was the Spaniard at this manœuvre that he put his helm over, and allowed his ship to proceed, without touching brace or bowline, and at the same time discharged his starboard broadside. His guns, however, were so elevated that they did little execution, and, when the *Victory* was able to bring her guns to bear on the *Principe d'Asturias's* quarters, she thundered in two well-directed broadsides which swept the Spaniard's decks, and so terrified him that, the moment his sails filled, he squared yards and led his squadron clear of the battle. The *Victory* then tacked into her station, followed by the *Irresistible*, *Barfleur*, *Egmont*, and *Goliath*, and the conflict now raged with desperate fury for the enemy. The *Barfleur*, *Egmont*, and *Goliath* fought obstinately, and such of our ships as had the good fortune to get into close action behaved splendidly.

When the *Victory* was in the thickest of the fight, the smoke not permitting the Commander-in-Chief to see all the ships of his squadron as distinctly as he wished, he went on to the poop to get a better view of the battle. While he was there, coolly surveying them, a marine close by him was struck by a shot, which smashed his head, and Sir John was literally covered by the man's brains and blood. Seeing him in that state, and fearing he was wounded, Captain Grey ran up and inquired earnestly if he was wounded. "I am not at all hurt," replied

the admiral coolly, and at the same time wiping his mouth, which was covered with blood. "But, do, George, try if you can get me an orange," and, a midshipman having brought him one, he ate it with the utmost composure. On his return to the quarter-deck he gave orders for signal 41, "Take suitable stations for mutual support," to be hoisted. Accordingly, Sir William Parker in the *Prince George*, with the *Orion*, *Irresistible* and *Diadem*, went to the support of the advanced ships, and attacked the rear of the enemy's main body, passing to leeward of it, whilst the *Victory*, with the remainder of the squadron in order, stood ready to attack either from the weather or lee side as might be most suitable. At this moment the Spanish Commander-in-Chief bore up, with nine battleships, and tried to pass round the British line and rejoin his leeward division. Nelson, being clear of the smoke, was able to see this, and, instead of waiting to tack in succession, wore immediately out of line to frustrate the enemy's design.

Sir John at once made the signal for the *Excellent* to support him in this masterly manœuvre, and the Spaniards, finding themselves baulked, at once hauled their wind again, thus bringing Nelson and Collingwood into the van and brunt of the battle (Plates IV. and V.). On getting close up Nelson found the enemy already crippled, and endeavouring to make

PLATE IV



SHOWING THE POSITIONS AT 12.45.

A. The main body of the Spanish fleet hauling up to the wind again on port tack and making more sail.

B. The *Captain* (Commodore Nelson) engaged with the *Santisima Trinidad* (136 guns) and two other three-decked ships.

C. The *Culloden* (Captain Troubridge) engaged with the war-ships of the enemy's main body.

D. The *Blenheim* (Captain Frederick) going to the assistance of the *Captain* and the *Culloden*.

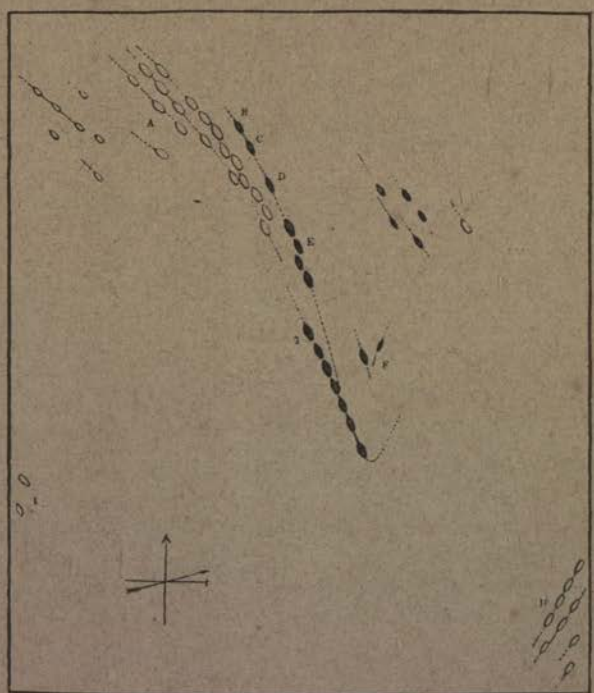
E. The *Prince George* (Rear-Admiral William Parker), the *Orion*, *Irresistible*, and *Diadem* going to the attack on rear of main body.

F. *Colossus* (Captain G. Murray) disabled by the loss of her foreyard and foretopsail-yard.

G. The Spanish ships which, not being able to rejoin, are retreating, and making all sail to the southward.

H. A Portuguese frigate casually in company.

PLATE V



SHOWING THE POSITIONS AT 1.30 P.M.

A. Enemy's fleet making off in great confusion.

B. The *Blenheim* (Captain Frederick).
C. The *Captain* (Commodore Nelson).
D. The *Culloden* (Captain Troubridge). } All three closely engaged.

E. Rear-Admiral Parker with the *Prince George*, *Orion*, *Irresistible*, and *Diadem* commencing action with the enemy's rear.

F. The *Colossus* disabled, and the *Minerva* frigate approaching to her assistance.

G. The *Victory* with the remainder of the fleet.

H. Spanish ships (cut off) close hauled on starboard tack.

I. Spanish ships to windward some distance off.

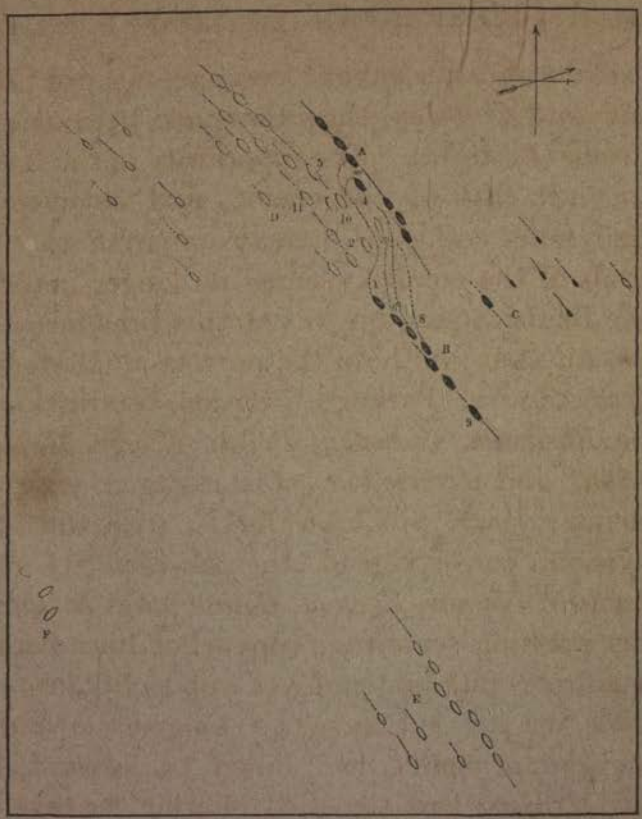
their escape, while the British van was maintaining a very unequal contest. He immediately proceeded to support the ships that were hardest pressed, attacking the *Santisima Trinidad*, which was then engaged by the *Culloden*. For nearly an hour the contest here was fast and furious, for the other Spanish ships brought their guns to bear upon the *Captain*, and her foretopmast was shot away, when the *Blenheim* arrived to her support. Nelson put his helm down, and, letting his ship come to the wind, ran into the *San Nicolas* and proceeded to board her, and soon compelled her to surrender. Berry (at this time a passenger), jumping into her mizzen-chains, was the first to get into the enemy's ship, being immediately followed by Nelson at the head of his boarders and a part of the 69th regiment doing duty as marines. Whilst he was still on the *San Nicolas's* deck, the *San Josef* fell on board of her, in a disabled condition, offering the Commodore an opportunity to board her from his prize. Accompanied by Captain Berry and Lieutenant Pierson of the 69th and a small party of boarders, he jumped into the *San Josef's* mizzen-chains, only to learn that the ship had already surrendered. He had thus the good fortune and satisfaction of receiving on her quarter-deck the officers' swords of two battleships.

As the ships of Rear-Admiral Parker's division approached those of the enemy, in support of the

Captain and her gallant companions, the *Blenheim* and *Culloden*, the cannonade became more furious (Plate V.). The superiority of the British fire over that of the enemy, and its effect on their hulls and sails, was so apparent that the result of the conflict seemed no longer doubtful. The British squadron was at this time formed in two divisions, both on the port tack (Plate VI); Rear-Admiral Parker's division, consisting of the *Blenheim*, *Culloden*, *Prince George*, *Captain*, *Orion*, and *Irresistible*, was engaged with the enemy's rear. Sir John Jervis, with the other division, consisting of the *Excellent*, *Victory*, *Barfleur*, *Namur*, *Egmont*, *Goliath*, and *Britannia*, was pressing forward in support of his advanced squadron, but had not yet got right into the thick of the action. The *Colossus*, owing to her loss of spars, had fallen to leeward, and the *Minerva* had signalled offering to take her in tow, but this was declined by Captain Murray.

The admiral now saw that, in the confusion of their retreat, several of the enemy's ships had doubled on each other and were three or four deep in the rear (Plate VI). It was, therefore, his design to reach the weathermost of these ships, and then bear up and rake them all in succession, with the seven ships of his division. Owing, however, to the position of his rear ships, he was unable to accomplish this, so he ordered the *Excellent*, the leading ship of

PLATE VI



FROM 2 P.M. TO 3.30 P.M.

A. The advanced division of the British fleet, consisting of the *Blenheim*, *Culloden*, *Prince George*, *Captain*, *Orion*, *Irresistible*, and *Diadem*.
B. The rear division, consisting of the *Excellent*, *Victory*, *Barfleur*, *Namur*, *Egmont*, *Goliath*, and *Britannia*.
C. *Colossus*.
D. The main body of the enemy making off in confusion.
E. Spanish ships (cut off) now coming up to rejoin.
F. Two Spanish line-of-battle ships not seen at the commencement of action now approaching.
1. The track of the *Excellent* when Captain Collingwood passed between the *San Isidore* (No. 2) and the *Salvador del Mundo* (No. 3) to the support of the *Captain* (No. 4) and the ships engaged with the *Santisima Trinidad* (No. 5) and others of the enemy's centre.
6. Track of the *Victory* and (No. 7) of the *Barfleur* in bearing up to engage the enemy's rear ships to leeward.
8. Track of the *Namur*, which bore up with the *Victory* and *Barfleur*, but afterwards luffed up to oppose the enemy's ships coming up and to cover the prizes.
9. The *Britannia*.
10. The *San Nicolas*, and (11) the *San Josef*, which were boarded and carried by Commodore Nelson.

his division, to bear up, and, with the *Victory*, he himself passed to leeward of the enemy's leewardmost rear ships, which, although their fire had been almost silenced, continued to resist their opponents.

Captain Collingwood, in the *Excellent*, in obedience to the admiral's order, passed between the two rearmost ships of the enemy's line, giving to the one most to windward, the *San Ysidro* (74), so effective a broadside, that, with what she had before, she was induced to submit. The *Excellent* afterwards bore down to the *Santisima Trinidad*, a three-decker which lay to leeward, but, observing that the *Orion* was closely engaged with her, and the *Victory* approaching, he merely threw a few discharges of musketry into her, and passed on, as before narrated, to the support of the *Captain*. His interference here was most opportune, for the *Captain*, having lost her foretopmast, had become almost ungovernable, and had expended all the ammunition she had on hand. The Spanish three-decker, *San Josef*, had lost her mizzen-mast, and before the *Excellent* arrived she had dropped astern and fallen foul of the *San Nicolas* (74). The *Excellent* gave the two ships, thus doubled on each other, her fire, and then moved on to the assistance of the leading ships in their attack on the enemy's centre. Meanwhile, Sir John Jervis ordered the *Victory* to be placed on the lee quarter of the *Salvador del Mundo* (112), and,

having signalled the *Irresistible* and *Diadem* to suspend their firing, threw into the three-decker so terrible a fire that her captain, seeing the *Barfleur* approaching, struck to the *Victory*. The *Santisima Trinidad* ceased to resist, and the general opinion is that she had struck her colours. Sir James Saumarez affirmed that, whilst he engaged her in the *Orion*, she made the signal of submission; none the less she escaped capture.

Four of the enemy's ships were now in possession of the British squadron, but the day was nearing its close, and the Spanish ships which had been separated (Plate VII.) from their main body, in the morning, now approached. It could now be seen that two new ships were bearing down from to windward, and two of the enemy's flying ships were wearing round to support their chief, who was at that time severely pressed. These circumstances, but more especially the lateness of the hour, and the fact that the prizes were not yet properly secured, determined the British admiral to bring to. Nine Spanish ships of the line had advanced to fire into the *Britannia* and the rear of the British ships; but these were able to keep them in check. The *Victory*, *Barfleur*, and *Namur* had formed, to cover the prizes, and about 4 p.m. Sir John Jervis therefore made the "Preparative," and shortly afterwards the signal "Bring to!" The newly arrived Spaniards, in approaching, opened fire on the covering ships;

PLATE VII

THE POSITIONS 3.45 P.M.

A. The rear division of the British fleet, viz.: 1. *Britannia*, 2. *Goliath*, 3. *Barfleur*, 4. *Victory* (Flag), 5. *Namur*, 6. *Excellent*, 7. *Egmont*, covering the prizes and the injured ships of the advanced division against the enemy's fresh ships arrived to support their Commander-in-Chief.

B. The *Santisima Trinidad* striking, or having struck, her flag.

C. Two of the enemy's line-of-battle ships from the van wearing upon the new ships joining and going to the support of their admiral.

D. The *Captain* foul of her two prizes, the *San Nicolas* and *San Josef*.

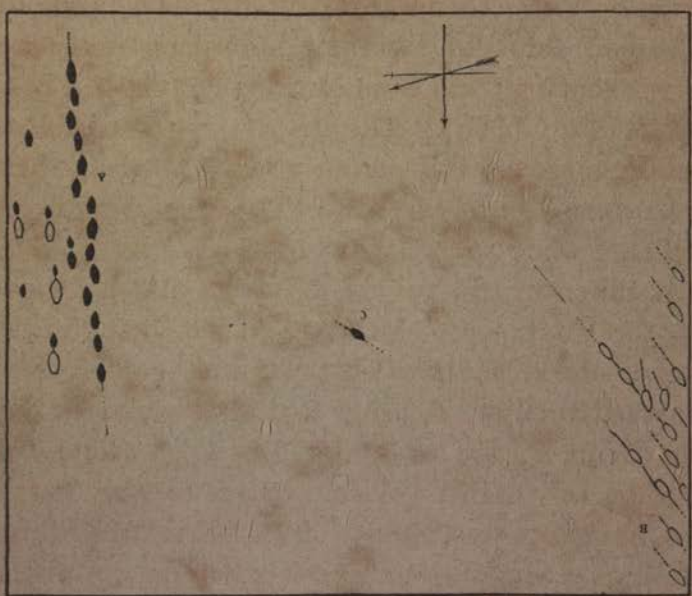
E. The *Diadem* (64) and the *Minerva* frigate assisting the *Captain* to disengage from her prizes.

F. The *Colossus*.

G. The *Lively* frigate having in tow the *San Ysidro*, the first Spanish ship that struck.

H. The *Salvador del Mundo*, attended by the *Bonne Citoyenne*.

PLATE VIII



THE EVENING OF FEBRUARY 14TH.

A. The British fleet formed in a line of battle (line ahead). The prizes and disabled ship being to leeward, in tow of frigates.

B. The Spanish fleet to windward in great confusion.

C. The *Niger* frigate (Captain Foote) the look-out of the British fleet.

but, though coming fresh into the action, and much superior in numbers, they were content to deliver a few irregular broadsides, after which they left their captured ships in the lurch, and seemed too pleased to be allowed to escape with their discomfited chief and his disabled ships to think of molesting our ships, or preventing them from forming on the starboard tack (Plate VIII.). The frigates were ordered to take charge of the prizes, and all four of them were soon securely in tow. The *Captain*, having suffered very severely in her masts and rigging, was taken in tow by the *Minerva*. At the close of the day, soon after 5 p.m., it being then nearly dark, the British fleet was again formed in a perfect line, steering to the southward, and the *Niger* frigate was ordered to keep a look-out during the night. With regard to this battle we have the testimony of Colonel Drinkwater Bethune, who was an eye-witness on board the *Lively*, and thus able to give his undivided attention to the whole of the day's action. He says:

"The fire of the British squadron was, throughout the battle, superior, in the proportion of five or six to one. Almost all the Spanish wounded that had lost limbs died for want of assistance. The loss of the British squadron in killed and wounded was 300, which was very moderate. The expenditure of ammunition was enormous. The *Culloden* alone expended 170 barrels of powder, the *Captain* 146, and the *Blenheim* 108, yet not a single gun burst during the day's action."

He goes on to state:

"I wish I could convey, in some adequate manner, the work of the chief personages in this glorious transaction. The praise of those who were most conspicuous is far above the power of my pen to express. I confess the admiration with which I viewed their conduct would not allow me to suppress the strong feelings excited in my mind by all the glories of that memorable day. Certain it is that, while the admiral and some distinguished actors in this scene are covered with never-failing laurels, if others of the squadron had not the same important share in the operations of the day, it was owing to circumstances not dependent on themselves, and to no want of ardour or personal exertion."

"If I may be permitted to hazard an opinion, the whole squadron have gained immortal honour, for the victory of February 14th stands, in all its circumstances, first and unparalleled in naval history."

The British fleet lay to for the night, and by daybreak of the 15th they had drifted to about four leagues off Cape St. Vincent.

In the evening of the 14th, whilst talking over the events of the day, when Captain Calder hinted that the manœuvre carried out by Nelson was an unauthorised departure from the prescribed mode of attack, Sir John replied, "It certainly was so! and if ever you commit such a breach of your orders I will forgive you also." Sir John gave Nelson a very flattering reception on board his flagship after the action.

There being little wind on the 15th, both

168]

fleets remained almost becalmed in sight of one another, the Spaniards appearing to be in great disorder. On the 16th the British fleet was still off Cape St. Vincent, being unable to weather it owing to adverse winds and the disabled state of the prizes. In the afternoon, however, Sir John made the signal to bear away for Lagos Bay, and the prizes came to an anchor there the same evening. As soon as the fleet had assembled the admiral communicated, in general orders, his thanks to the admirals and officers of the squadron in the following terms:

"'VICTORY,' LAGOS BAY,
"*February* 16*th*, 1797.

"SIR,

"No language I am possessed of can convey the high sense I entertain of the exemplary conduct of the flag-officers, captains, officers, seamen, marines, and soldiers embarked on board every ship of the squadron I have the honour to command, present at the vigorous and successful attack made upon the fleet of Spain on the 14th instant. The signal advantage obtained by His Majesty's arms upon that day is entirely owing to their determined valour and discipline, and I request you will accept yourself, and give my thanks and approbation, to those composing the crew of the ship under your command.

"I am, sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"J. JERVIS."

Arrangements having been made with the Portuguese authorities at Lagos for the recep-

tion of the Spanish prisoners of war, they were landed, to the number of 2,300 men, and commenced their march to the Spanish frontier.

When the *Lively* arrived in Plymouth on March 25th with the Viceroy of Corsica on board the first news that greeted her was that the National Bank of England had shut its doors and suspended cash payments, in the belief that the union of the French and Spanish fleets for the invasion of England was inevitable. People could talk of nothing but England's disgrace and downfall. The news had but lately come that Mantua had capitulated. Three attempts had been made by the Austrians, in superior force, to dislodge Bonaparte from his position, but all had failed. The British fleet had been forced to abandon Corsica and the Mediterranean. Peace negotiations, which had been first begun by the Republic, had ended by the British envoy being given forty-eight hours to leave France, and, although the Government had not expected a favourable result, the effect on the people was disheartening. Consols fell to fifty-one. The unsuccessful attempt at the invasion of Ireland had only been prevented by the circumstances of wind and weather, not by the Channel Fleet, and the country had lost confidence in its Navy and was in great fear of invasion. When, therefore, the people were told that "Invasion was not to be thought of, for Sir John Jervis had defeated that measure," and the particulars of

the glorious battle of St. Valentine's Day were made known, the revulsion was great. The veil that had covered the rottenness of the Spanish fleet was removed, and at the same time it was revealed to the nation what a force it had in the leaders and heroes of that day.

The following is the despatch sent by Sir John Jervis to the Admiralty:

"'Victory,' Lagos Bay,
February 16th, 1797.

"Sir,

"The hopes of falling in with the Spanish fleet expressed in my letter to you of the 13th inst. were confirmed last night, by our distinctly hearing the report of their signal-guns, and by intelligence received from Captain Foote, of His Majesty's ship *Niger*, who had, with equal judgment and perseverance, kept company with them for several days on my prescribed rendezvous (which from the strong S.E. winds I had never been able to reach), and that they were not more than the distance of three or four leagues from us. I anxiously awaited the dawn of day, when, being on the starboard tack, Cape St. Vincent bearing E. by N. eight leagues, I had the satisfaction of seeing a number of ships extending from S.W. to S., the wind then at W. by S. At forty-nine minutes past ten, the weather being extremely hazy, *La Bonne Citoyenne* made the signal that the ships seen were of the line, twenty-seven in number. His Majesty's squadron under my command, consisting of fifteen ships of the line, named in the margin, happily formed into the most compact order of sailing in two lines. By carrying a press of sail, I was fortunate in getting in with the enemy's

fleet at half-past 11 o'clock, before it had time to connect and form a regular order of battle.

"Such a moment was not to be lost; and, confident in the skill, valour, and discipline of the officers and men I had the happiness to command, and judging that the honour of His Majesty's arms and the circumstances of the war in these seas required a considerable degree of enterprise, I felt myself justified in departing from the *regular system*; and, *passing through their fleet* in a line formed with the utmost celerity, tacked, and thereby separated one-third from the main body, after a partial cannonade which prevented their junction till the evening, and, by the very great exertions of the ships which had the good fortune to arrive up with the enemy on the port tack, the ships named in the margin were captured, and the action ceased about 5 p.m. I enclose the most correct list I have been able to obtain of the Spanish fleet opposed to me, amounting to twenty-seven sail of the line, and an account of the killed and wounded in His Majesty's ships, as well as in those taken from the enemy. The moment the latter (almost totally dismasted), and His Majesty's ships the *Captain* and *Culloden* are in a state to put to sea, I shall avail myself of the first favourable wind to proceed off Cape St. Vincent on my way to Lisbon. Captain Calder, whose able assistance has greatly contributed to the public service during my command, is the bearer of this, and will more particularly describe to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty the movements of the squadron on the 14th, and the present state of it.

"I am, sir, etc.,

"J. JERVIS."

"EVAN NEPEAN,

"Secretary of Admiralty."

The following letter was written to Lord Seymour and sent by Captain Calder:

"'VICTORY,'
"*February 17th*, 1797.

"MY DEAR LORD,

"You will lay me under a very great obligation by contributing all in your power to the immediate employment of Captain Hallowell,[1] in a good frigate, and placing him again under my command, as my value of him is not to be calculated. Our friend Garlies will relate our late transactions much better than I can write them. I wish most heartily the public would be satisfied with accounts of actions in the style of Sir George Walton,[2] for, although I do not profess to like fighting, I would much rather have an action with the enemy than detail one.

"Yours most truly,
"J. JERVIS.

"*To* LORD HUGH SEYMOUR,
"First Lord of the Admiralty."

It has been suggested by some that the pursuit of a fleet so disgracefully beaten would have increased the British triumph, but Jervis was not the man to risk such a substantial success for a doubtful further gain. The victory so essential for England was won, the worthlessness of the Spanish Navy was proved, and it could no longer be accounted a factor in the political situation.

[1] Capt. Hallowell, who was on board the *Victory* in the action of St. Vincent.

[2] Noted for his laconic report of his action.

Jervis was undoubtedly right in not exposing the result of this great day to the accidents that might easily happen to his small fleet, accidents that cannot be prevented.

In the words of Mahan:

"To Jervis alone belongs the honour of attacking such heavy odds, as well as for the correct and sufficient combination by which he hoped to snatch a victory from superior numbers. The whole responsibility, and the whole original plan, were his, and no man can take it from him.

"To him, too, was primarily due the admirable efficiency of his fleet."

In commenting on this action some critics[1] have found fault with Jervis for tacking in succession, and suggest that the Commander-in-Chief should have tacked together, and brought up all his fleet to the attack on the retreating Spanish main body; but these critics ignore the lee division of the Spaniards, and the other fresh ships, which would, in this event, have come to the support of the main body. The effect of Sir John Jervis's tactics was to keep these fresh ships off, and to maintain the complete separation of the two divisions of the enemy until darkness put an end to the fight.

Admiral Sir William Parker, in his account of the action, testifies to the covering power of the Commander-in-Chief's ships in protecting the attacking ships of his own division from the lee

[1] Amongst others Mr. David Hannay, in his interesting book, *A Short History of the British Navy*, p. 348, etc.

division of the Spaniards. Jervis kept the whole situation in hand, and his was the directing mind throughout. The responsibility for attacking so large a force with so few ships was his alone. To Jervis was due the efficiency of the fleet under his command. At the critical moment when victory was necessary and essential to England, he put into action a scheme long planned and long prepared for, and carried it through successfully. It was a timely and a daring action, well conceived by him and splendidly carried out by the captains of the fleet and the well-trained and disciplined crews, most of whom had been long under his command and had gained their efficiency in serving under him.

On February 23rd, the weather threatening to blow hard, Lagos ceased to be a safe anchorage, and so rapidly did the wind and sea rise that most of the ships had to leave an anchor behind. On the 24th they entered the Tagus with the prizes.[1]

The delight with which news of the victory was received in England was unanimous. Sir

[1] The Spanish fleet appears to have been most indifferently manned; the flagships had not more than sixty or eighty seamen on board, the remainder of their crews consisting of pressed landsmen and soldiers drafted from their new levies. It does not seem to have been their intention to seek the British squadron; on the contrary, we have reason to think they would have been happy to have avoided it, in spite of their superiority in numbers; but the British admiral took advantage of the haze of the morning to surprise them. Their object, ever since February 5th, had been to reach Cadiz, but they were unable

John Jervis was created Earl St. Vincent, Vice-Admiral Waldegrave was created Baron Radstock and appointed Governor of Newfoundland, Vice-Admirals Parker and Thompson were made Baronets, Commodore Nelson received the Order of Knight of the Bath, and to all the admirals and captains of the fleet the King testified his approbation of their conduct. A medal was struck and distributed. The cities of Dublin, Bristol, Bath, and Liverpool manifested their gratitude to the Commander-in-Chief and his officers. Parliament voted a pension of £3,000 a year to Earl St. Vincent, and he received a magnificent sword from the Corporation of London, which is described in the following communication:

"It is my desire to convert the marks of acknowledgment from the Corporation of this

to do so owing to contrary winds. Some of the prisoners spoke very reasonably and sensibly about the operations of that day. In general, they were inclined to admit that the Spanish fleet was not in a proper state to appear at sea, and some of them, in the ill-humour of defeat, observed that it was not an uncommon thing, before the fleet quitted Cartagena, to hear both misfortune and disgrace predicted, if the fleet were to meet even an inferior force. An officer of one of the prizes declared that, on board the ship in which he served, it was impossible, after the first broadside, for the officers to persuade any of the crew to go aloft to repair the injured rigging, threats and persuasion being equally ineffectual. He had seen some severe examples made for disobedience of orders, but though two or three had been killed, and several wounded, these severities had had no effect. The panic-struck wretches, when called upon to go aloft, fell immediately on their knees, and in that posture cried out that they preferred being sacrificed on the spot to performing a duty in the execution of which they considered death as inevitable.—DRINKWATER BETHUNE, *Battle of St. Vincent.*

city into records of the memorable occasion on which they were given. The shell of your sword will have two views of the action enamelled, and, I hope, to your satisfaction. The hilt will have your ship with her name encircled with diamonds, the City Arms and your own all enamelled and executed, I hope, to your taste. The boxes to the gallant admirals will be oval, on the top a wreath of oak producing one of laurel, and in the centre a view of that point of the action which may best mark the part the respective admirals had in it, etc., etc.

" Your lordship's most obedient servant.

" BROOK WATSON.

" MANSION HOUSE,
" *May* 22*nd*, 1797."

CHAPTER IX

THE BLOCKADE OF CADIZ

1797

THE fleet under the Earl of St. Vincent remained in the Tagus till the end of the month, when, having refitted, and been reinforced by fresh ships which brought the number up to twenty-one sail of the line, it went to sea again.

In April St. Vincent received orders to blockade the port of Cadiz, within which port the Spanish fleet now lay, their numbers having been increased to thirty-six sail of the line, the intention of the Government being to prevent their junction with the French and Dutch fleets. At first the admiral cruised off the mouth of the harbour, but soon after he anchored and divided his squadron into two parts. The inshore squadron, consisting of ten of his best ships, was stationed just outside the entrance of the port, while the main body lay before Rota. The frigates and small craft cruised in the Bay of Biscay, or were detached on such particular service to the Mediterranean as the exigencies of the war, still raging in Italy, required.

On the approach of winter the Spaniards retreated to the upper part of the harbour and dismantled their ships. Lord St. Vincent then returned to the Tagus, leaving Vice-Admiral Parker, with eight sail of the line, to watch the port. Shortly after the fleet arrived in the Tagus Captain Troubridge having taken a valuable prize which was short of anchors and cables, brought her to Lisbon and reported the matter to his chief. St. Vincent asked the Portuguese authorities to allow her to go alongside the *Ville de Paris*, his flagship, which was then lying above Belem Castle. The standing orders of the port were that no merchantman was to pass above the castle, and the authorities refused his request in a discourteous manner. St. Vincent, who never could bear any opposition, made the signal for all the boats of the squadron to tow the prize up the river and past the castle. As they went by, the officer in command fired at them, a proceeding which still further irritated the chief, who thereupon wrote to the British Naval Commissioner, Sir Isaac Coffin, directing him to call upon the Minister of Marine and inform him that, should a second outrage of this kind occur, "he would blow the whole city about their ears," adding, that "they were a set of ladrones, and Don John at their head." The minister, greatly agitated, asked what would appease the great man. Sir Isaac's advice was that Don Rodrigo should immediately repair on

board the flagship and explain, as best he could, the conduct of the officer in command at Belem. The minister replied that the officer had already been cashiered, and went with the Commissioner on board the *Ville de Paris*. Lord St. Vincent received him very graciously, so much so that, when he left, he extolled the admiral's magnanimity. The result of the interview was that the officer who had fired, *in obedience to the regulations*, was not only reinstated, but promoted.

Soon after this affair the *Flora* (Captain Middleton) appeared off the bar and signalled "The enemy at sea!" At the same time a despatch was delivered from Sir William Parker stating that "he had been forced to retire before twenty sail of the line of the Spanish fleet." Never was more promptitude and energy shown than on this occasion. Lord St. Vincent received the intelligence at 7.25 p.m., and at 7.30 the signal was flying "Prepare for sea." At this moment most of the ships were refitting; some of them were dismantled; two of them, the *Theseus* and *Swiftsure*, had their holds clear, and transports alongside, and four were completely unrigged. At daybreak the next morning some of the ships reported "Ready for sea," and towards evening a fleet of thirteen ships of the line sailed in pursuit of the enemy; but before they arrived at Cadiz the Spaniards had retreated into the inner harbour again. They had no doubt been led to believe, from reports, that

St. Vincent's squadron was dismantled at Lisbon and could not get to sea, and, on finding out their mistake, lost no time in getting into port again and once more dismantled their ships. Sir William Parker resumed his station, and the admiral returned to the Tagus.

St. Vincent was a man of extraordinary vigour and energy. The activity of mind and body which enabled him to withstand hardships that had proved too much for others, seems to have been in great measure sustained by his keen sense of humour. He was a very early riser, and it is related of him that, on one occasion, whilst cruising with the fleet, he was called at daybreak by the lieutenant of the morning watch. The admiral made the usual inquiries, and was told that the morning was very fine, weather nearly calm, the sky cloudless, and the ships of the fleet "all in their stations." It was evident, from his eager assertions that all was well, the officer did not wish the admiral to come on deck.

"Well, then," said the admiral, "I think it is time for me to get up; what do you think?" The lieutenant incautiously answered, "I think you had better lie in bed, Sir John." "Why so," he answered, "for I cannot sleep?" "No, sir, but you may rest, for I believe you have not been in bed many hours." Sir John immediately saw his drift, and, being in a playful mood, determined to take a revenge according to his humour.

"Well, then, since you'll not let me get up—and sleep I cannot—and idleness, you know, is the mother of mischief—perhaps you will oblige me by bringing a book from my cabin." "What book do you wish, sir?" "Any that you can find will do." The lieutenant soon brought one, and it happened to be Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding*. "This," the admiral declared, "will do very well"; and, having requested him to light the candles, he added, "You will, perhaps, now further oblige me by reading a few pages to me." This was not at all to the lieutenant's liking, and he made an attempt to excuse himself by reminding the admiral that the captain and first lieutenant would both expect him on deck to prepare for washing decks, trimming sails, etc. "Never mind," said the admiral, "you know it is nearly calm, and no harm can happen, and I will bear you harmless; so sit down and read to me." The lieutenant, though a good sailor, was not good at reading, and being, moreover, much embarrassed by the novelty of the situation, performed his task so ludicrously that the admiral could with difficulty refrain from bursting into laughter. More than once the reader tried to escape by pointing out that it was broad daylight, but it was not until the admiral felt that he had had enough of the jest that he was at last allowed to depart. When he came on deck he was asked what on earth had kept him so

long below. He explained that, thinking it would be a good thing to have a quiet morning, he had ventured to recommend the admiral to remain in bed, and in return for this advice he had been set down to read a book to him. "Well, and what did he make you read?" he was asked. "Oh, how the devil should I know?" he answered testily. "I was too anxious to get away to think of that."

Whilst St. Vincent lay in the Tagus two great events were happening. On October 3rd Admiral Duncan defeated the Dutch at the battle of Camperdown and the mutiny took place at the Nore. This is not the place to describe the victory over the Dutch, but some notice must be taken of the mutinies at home, since their after-results, and the spirit which engendered them, soon extended to the fleet whose fortunes we are following. There has been a good deal of discussion in regard to the causes which led the men to mutiny, but there can be little doubt that one of the chief reasons was the low wage paid to the sailors. The scale of pay had not been raised since the time of Charles II., although in the intervening 150 years the purchasing power of money had decreased, causing a proportionate rise in the price of commodities, a process which has continued more or less ever since and is likely to continue in the future. But not only was the wage less than could be obtained outside the service, it was paid at

irregular and uncertain intervals and long after it had become due. Even then, the sailors did not receive it in cash, but in the form of pay-notes, which were tedious things to realise owing to red-tape regulations, and had often to be sold by the men at a considerable discount. So far as one can learn from the records of the time, there was no quarrel with the quantity of the food supplied to the men, though its quality may not always have been irreproachable, owing partly to the exigencies of the service and the imperfect means of storage, and partly to the dishonesty of contractors. In these circumstances it is hardly surprising that the system of enlistment was unsatisfactory, or that the majority of the crews consisted of a motley collection of landsmen, "quota" men, "state the case" men, convicts, and a small residue of good seamen, the last-named seldom exceeding one-third of the ship's company.

The "quota" men were those furnished from the separate counties, and were frequently bad characters recruited from the workhouse or debtors' prison. The "State the Case" men were men (seized by the press-gang) who thought themselves entitled to be released. They were constantly appealing to the Admiralty, who forwarded their letters to the captains of ships with "State the Case" written outside the envelope; hence their name.[1]

[1] David Hannay, *A Short History of the British Navy*, p. 355.

It was mainly against the system of payment by ticket that the fleet first mutinied at Spithead. The second mutiny there, was because the men, with some reason, thought that they had been deceived by the authorities. The mutiny at the Nore was more the work of political agitators.

At Spithead the authorities eventually conceded all the demands of the mutineers, even going so far as to remove about 100 officers from the ships which had objected to them. A fatal precedent was thus set, and the men were allowed to think that they could get rid of their officers as they pleased. Though the good seamen returned to duty, the others, belonging to a less disciplined class, required watching. At the Nore the mutiny was led by a man named Parker—who had served as a midshipman in the *Leander* and had been discharged from her for immoral conduct. Later on, when he had risen to be mate, he was reduced to able seaman for insubordination.

He was next heard of as a prisoner for debt at Edinburgh. To escape prison he took the bounty, and came into the Navy again as a "quota man" from Perth.

The London police had for some time been in the habit of sending criminals on board ships at Sheerness, among them being members of the Corresponding Society and the United Irishmen, recruits who were not at all likely to settle down into tractable or obedient seamen.

The following extracts from the log of the *Clyde*, which was stationed at the Nore in the spring of 1797, give a lively picture of the state of affairs which prevailed during the mutiny.

"*May* 12*th*, 1797.—A mutiny broke out in the fleet at the Nore, and every captain was turned out of, or had left, their ships[1] with the exception of Captain Cunningham and his officers, who continued on board their ship notwithstanding the remonstrances of Parker. Captain Cunningham chose rather to suffer the indignity offered by that man, and the risk of his personal safety, than to quit his ship; he accordingly made a point of remaining on board, although frequently threatened by the mutineers of the fleet to be taken out of the ship.

"13*th*–22*nd*.—No particular occurrences. The fleet still in the hands of the mutineers, and the delegates rowing round the fleet, doing as they pleased—landing at Sheerness and organizing a system.

"23*rd*.—The delegates came on board and ordered the *Clyde* to the Great Nore. When Captain Cunningham remonstrated, Parker said that if the ship was not taken there, the *Inflexible* would compel it. Captain Cunningham suffered the ship to be moved, but took command from the man who was sent for that purpose, and worked the ship himself, thereby retaining his authority on board.

"24*th*–28*th*.—Ships still in the hands of the mutineers, etc.

"Parker arrived on board the *Clyde* to persuade the ship's company to go to Tilbury Fort,

[1] Yard-ropes were rove at the yardarms of the several ships of the fleet.

to reduce the force there, and make an easy passage for the men-of-war in the Thames to join those at the Nore. At this time Captain Cunningham was on shore, where he had been sent for by Admiral Buckner, to a Committee of Captains. When the third lieutenant was sent to him to inform him what was doing on board, he instantly returned to the ship and prevented it by pointing out to the ship's company the enormity of the crime, which had the desired effect, and they promised, if he would remain on board, they would not go, but would support him. The *Isis* and *Brilliant* at this time, having no captains on board, were ready to proceed on this service; but, as the *Clyde* would not join, they were prevented, and so Parker abandoned the project.

"Later in the day the Lords of the Admiralty arrived at Sheerness. Captain Cunningham went on shore to pay his respects, having first given orders that signals for delegates should not be answered by the *Clyde*. He then proposed to Captain Sir H. B. Neale to accompany him to Harwich to take on board the Duke of Wurtemburgh, agreeably to the order the ships were then under. The *San Fiorenzo* arrived from Portsmouth just as the mutiny broke out and they had received the King's pardon there, but were forced into the mutiny on arrival.

"*May 29th.*—The Admiralty ordered the King's pardon to be sent on board all the ships. Captain Cunningham read it to the ship's company, and ordered the white ensign to be hoisted, which was also done by the *San Fiorenzo*, *Grampus*, *Brilliant*, and *Iris*. In these ships the ensign was up and down, according as the parties were in the ascendant, but in the latter ships it was soon hauled down altogether, and the red flag hoisted. The *Clyde's* was kept up until the *In-*

flexible got springs on her cables and brought her broadsides to bear upon the *Clyde*, when Captain Cunningham thought it prudent to comply also. The ship was now ready to quit the mutiny, and Captain Cunningham determined this night to push for Harwich; but, after dark, two men came from the *Director* stating that they hoped in the morning to bring that ship to join, consequently Captain Cunningham thought it proper to remain until next morning, when the plan of the *Director* was found to have failed. Having informed the Board of Admiralty of this circumstance, he received their directions that, if possible, he was to take the ship into Sheerness, which he accomplished next morning at daylight, and hoisted Admiral Buckner's flag that had been hauled down by the mutineers. This was accomplished with so much expedition that only a few shots were fired by the *Sandwich* and a few gunboats. This may be considered the first step to breaking up the mutiny and causing distrust amongst the disloyal seamen.

"*May* 30*th*.—The keys of the magazines restored by the delegates." [1]

Parker had given orders that no ships should pass without cheering the red flag. At the time a Russian frigate, commanded by Captain Muller, went out of harbour, and, as she approached the *Clyde*, a gun was pointed, and

[1] Captain Cunningham was threatened several times by Parker, if he presumed to remain on board the *Clyde*, to be taken out by force, and he proceeded so far as to threaten that every tenth man should be taken out of the ship and, with Captain Cunningham, hanged; but regardless of these threats, he still adhered to his determination to remain on board, and even punished a man for a crime during the heat of the mutiny.

Kennedy (denominated Parker's captain) was preparing to fire it, when Captain Cunningham jumped off the gangway with his foot upon the priming and declared the gun should not be fired, thus preventing an insult to a foreign nation. Captain Neale, of the *San Fiorenzo*, tried to get into harbour as he heard that the delegates intended to remove him from his ship. He cut his cables, but did not succeed in getting into harbour, though he contrived to get out to the Downs and then proceeded to Portsmouth.

Ships which had deserted Admiral Duncan in Holland arrived at Sheerness with the red flag flying, but in nearly all of them there was a loyal minority, and the Portsmouth ships were not at all in sympathy with Parker. It was quite clear that the good men needed supporting with a strong hand, and that an example would have to be made of the disloyal majority if the fleet was to return to its duties.

It will be noted that, where the admirals or captains showed firmness in suppressing the mutinous ringleaders, they obtained the respect of their crews, and where they showed weakness the opposite result followed. Dr. Baird, who knew as much of the men as anybody, stated afterwards that—

"The cause of mutiny in the Channel fleet was not owing to a want or scarcity of provisions, but to indulgence, after the action of the 1st June, in excess of drunkenness, and going

on shore, the officers setting the example, in late parties, and boats going on shore at late hours."

I have made this digression to the mutiny at home because St. Vincent had afterwards much to do with quelling it in some of his ships abroad; for the contagion quickly spread, and soon reached the fleet at Cadiz, where it would undoubtedly have prevented the continuance of the blockade had not St. Vincent at once nipped all attempts at insubordination in the bud before they had time to develop. By this means he stiffened the backs of the loyal men and awed the demagogues and agitators into submission. One of the earliest and most melancholy instances of insubordination took place in the *Kingfisher*, commanded by Captain John Maitland. The crew refused to weigh the anchor, just as they had done many years earlier under St. Vincent himself in the *Albany*.

Captain Maitland immediately singled out one of the ringleaders and ordered him to be seized up for punishment; but when this had been done one of the petty officers deliberately went up on to the grating and cut the seizings to release the prisoner. On this Maitland drew his dirk and laid the offender dead, or mortally wounded, on the deck.[1]

Two other men were also severely wounded

[1] Brenton, *Life of St. Vincent*, vol. i pp. 359, 360.

by Captain Maitland. He was well supported by his officers, and the mutiny was quelled. The marines remained, as they have ever done, faithful to their King. Having thus subdued his rebellious crew by this well-timed but severe measure, he proceeded to sea, not at all afraid of trusting himself with his refractory people. On joining the fleet off Cadiz he demanded a court-martial on himself for having put the man to death. It was granted, and he was acquitted, but admonished to be more temperate in future.

It was, of course, impossible for St. Vincent to screen his crews entirely from contagion with the mutinous spirit; indeed, so great was the reliance of the Admiralty on his nerve and his system that a number of the most disaffected crews were sent out to be under his command, full discretion being given him to deal with them.

As we shall see, he fully justified the trust reposed in him, and, by a wise combination of prompt severity, tempered by judicious clemency, successfully exercised the immense powers delegated to him.

It is in a crisis of this kind, when the fate of a whole empire may hang upon the constitution of a single mind and the firmness of a single will, that a nation learns the true value of a man. Had the crews under St. Vincent been allowed to set loyalty and discipline at nought—and we know, from what happened elsewhere, how easily this might have come about—a

national disaster of almost incalculable extent must have ensued.

It is clear that the blockade of Cadiz must have ceased, the Spanish fleet would have been able to go out to join the French unopposed, and Bonaparte would have secured temporary command of the Channel. Had this been accomplished whilst her fleets were in a state of mutiny, and Ireland panting for revenge, England's position would have become well-nigh desperate.

As soon as St. Vincent learned from the Admiralty the state of affairs at home, and was warned to look out for the appearance of similar trouble in his own fleet, he assembled all the captains of the marines on board the *Ville de Paris* and cautioned them to keep a watchful eye on the men. He says:

"I directed a subaltern to visit them at their meals; I exhorted them to keep up the pride of their detachments, to prevent conversation being carried on in Irish, and to call the roll at least twice a day."

Realising that if the ship's companies were left unoccupied they were more likely to become discontented, he took care to give them constant employment; so much so that the Spaniards could hardly have imagined that there was any cause for trouble in the British fleet, for, in order to keep the ships and crews constantly at work,

the entire squadron under Nelson, which included the pick of the fleet, was ordered to bombard the town every night, launches and a bomb-vessel being fitted out at Gibraltar to help in these operations.

Unfortunately, St. Vincent was soon to lose Nelson's invaluable help and support in his present difficult situation. The question of an attack on Santa Cruz de Teneriffe had long been discussed between them, and, though St. Vincent was not very sanguine of success, the possibility of seizing a galleon containing some millions of money seems to have decided him to make the attempt.

Accordingly, on July 14th Nelson was sent off with a squadron consisting of three 74-gun ships, a 50-gun ship, three frigates, and a cutter on what proved to be an ill-fated expedition.

A description of the attack on Santa Cruz belongs more properly to the life of Nelson than to this book. Suffice it to say that it was a failure, in which Nelson and all the British forces concerned behaved splendidly and the Spanish Governor of the town most nobly. Nelson lost his arm and Captain Fremantle was wounded, while the *Fox* foundered with her crew, and Captain Bowen was killed on shore. On July 27th the expedition set sail again for Cadiz and joined the Commander-in-Chief some three weeks later. The latter received Nelson with generous sympathy and appreciation.

His arrival had been preceded by a frigate sent on ahead with a letter which revealed the depth of Nelson's despondence. He tells St. Vincent—

"I am become a burden to my friends and useless to my country. When I leave your command, I am become dead to the world. I go hence, and am no more seen."

St. Vincent replied:

"Mortals cannot command success, you and your companions have certainly deserved it by the greatest degree of heroism and perseverance that ever was exhibited."

On August 20th Nelson returned to England invalided by his wounds and the loss of his right arm. But, though maimed and discouraged by his latest experiences, the indomitable spirit of the man is shown by his remark to Colonel Drinkwater Bethune on hearing of the victory of Camperdown which took place shortly after his return: "I would give this other arm to be with Duncan at this moment"; and, on meeting Duncan afterwards when he returned to England after his victory over the Dutch, he thus addressed him: "Don't think of me, my lord, but make the most of your own victory, while you can; for it will soon be succeeded by others, and I shall not be idle."

Six months later, on April 10th, Nelson, now completely recovered from his injuries, sailed from England and arrived at Lisbon on the 17th. On the 30th he rejoined St. Vincent, who

received him with open arms. Nelson found his chief stern and resolved as ever in facing the dangers of the situation, but somewhat despondent as to the results of the war. He had never approved of it, and was eager for it to be at an end. He was confronted by mutinous behaviour in some of the ships lately sent out to him. By his regulations, inter-communication between the ships of the squadron had been generally discouraged; between the ships lately arrived from England it was now absolutely forbidden, except by express permission from the Commander-in-Chief himself. In his management of the situation he found, as might have been expected, the greatest help in those officers and ships' companies who had been, as it were, brought up on his discipline and moulded by him. Upon the arrival of a new ship he would sometimes transfer to her the captain from one of those which had formed part of the Mediterranean Squadron. Whilst he allowed no rule to be relaxed, and took care that any necessary punishment was rigorously carried out with such promptitude that it followed immediately on the crime, St. Vincent was, at the same time, invariably just and considerate, and showed himself untiring in his zeal for the health and well-being of the men.

As an instance of this it may be mentioned that, when the *Alcmena* arrived from England with letters for the seamen of the fleet from the

mutinous ships at the Nore urging them to resistance, Captain Dacres of the *Barfleur* reported the fact to the chief and asked whether they should be withheld. "Certainly not," he replied, "let every letter be immediately delivered. I dare to say the Commander-in-Chief will know how to support his own authority." He had always regarded the prompt delivery of letters as a thing of great importance, and had set up a post-office on board his own ship in charge of a lieutenant called the postmaster.

Nor were the letters of the men and their prompt delivery the only objects of his consideration. He found time to attend to the smallest details likely to promote the comfort of the crews. For instance, on one occasion there happened to be a scarcity of tobacco at the port, which enhanced the price of it to such an extent that the pursers of the ships had to curtail the supply. Hearing of this, he ordered the supply to be continued as usual, and undertook to make good the excess in cost from his private purse. At the same time he would not tolerate the smallest breach of the orders and regulations on the part of either the officers or men of his fleet. Any man who neglected to take off his hat at the playing of the National Anthem was sure to be most severely reprimanded.

All this insistence on the carrying out of the regulations down to the smallest detail was a most necessary part of his system for maintain-

ing discipline and protecting the comfort and efficiency of the ships; for to such a pitch had the mutinous spirit arisen amongst the worst characters that Sir Isaac Coffin tells us that, whilst he was in the Tagus off Lisbon, a notable priest (who had been appointed to attend the Roman Catholics of the fleet, and was paid 3*s*. a day for his ministrations) showed him a letter he had received from two seamen in the *Ville de Paris* (the flagship) which stated that they intended to assassinate the Commander-in-Chief as soon as the mutiny broke out. The priest also produced a copy of his reply, recommending them " to defer their plan," for they could hardly consider that the chief was *quite* prepared for so sudden an exit!

In the *Princess Royal* mutiny, fostered by the formidable agitator Bott, a ruined and villainous lawyer, the Corresponding Society's delegate on the Cadiz station, had gone so far that he confessed that it was the intention to hang Lord St. Vincent, and to transfer the command to another delegate called Davidson; all the officers were to be turned out of their ships except the master of the flagship, Jackson, who was to remain until the fleet had been navigated up the Mediterranean to join the ships there, and, when these also had been induced to mutiny, the whole fleet was to have proceeded to Ireland.

Now we must see how Lord St. Vincent dealt with this mutinous spirit and the villainous designs which lay beneath it. The most notable

case of insubordination, and the one which did more than all the rest to break the treasonable spirit among the men, and showed them conclusively that it was the Commander-in-Chief and his officers who were to rule the fleet, and not the delegates, occurred on the arrival of Sir Roger Curtis's squadron at a moment when the disaffection was at its height. No sooner had it joined than applications reached the Commander-in-Chief asking for courts-martial on mutineers in three of the ships, the *Marlborough*, *Lion*, and *Centaur*. The case of the *Marlborough* (the only one that I propose to deal with here) is interesting because it serves to show us how one man, by his dignified self-possession and calm reliance on his own superiority of nerve and intellect, was able to enforce law and discipline throughout a powerful fleet, and at the same time to maintain the menace to the enemy he was blockading.

As the squadron approached, and before the request for a court-martial was made, St. Vincent, knowing that the *Marlborough* had been one of the most disaffected ships at Spithead, ordered her to take up a berth in the centre, at a small distance from the rest of the fleet. It happened that a violent mutiny had broken out in her at Berehaven, and again during the passage out to Cadiz; but it had been suppressed mainly by the exertions of the first lieutenant. A court-martial was directed to assemble and try the principal mutineers, and the result was

that one of them was sentenced by the court to be hanged. The Commander-in-Chief, deeming it necessary that the sentence should be carried out immediately in order to prevent a worse outbreak, ordered the man to be executed on the following morning; he also decided that the sentence was to be carried out by the crew of the *Marlborough* alone, and that no part of the boats' crews of the other ships were to assist in the punishment, as had been usual on similar occasions.

When this order was received on board the *Marlborough* Captain Ellison proceeded to the *Ville de Paris* and informed the chief that his ship's company had determined that none of the crew should suffer capital punishment, and that it was this determination which had been the cause of the previous mutiny. The captain also expressed his conviction that the *Marlborough's* crew would never permit the man to be hanged on board that ship.

The Commander-in-Chief received the report on the quarter-deck in the presence of the officers and ship's company, who listened to the statement in dead silence. Lord St. Vincent, standing with his hat in hand over his head (as was his custom, the whole time when he was being addressed by any one, of whatever rank), listened attentively until Captain Ellison ceased to speak; then, after a pause, he replied:

"What! Do you mean to tell me, Captain

Ellison, that you cannot *command* his Majesty's ship the *Marlborough*? For, if that is the case, sir, I will immediately send on board an officer who can."

Captain Ellison then asked permission for the boats' crews of the other ships to assist as usual in the execution, for he really did not think the *Marlborough's* crew would carry it out themselves.

Lord St. Vincent sternly answered: "Captain Ellison, you are an old officer, sir—have served long, suffered severely in the service, and have lost an arm in action, and I should be very sorry that any advantage should be taken of your advanced years. The man *shall* be hanged at eight o'clock to-morrow morning, *and by his own ship's company*, for not a hand from any other ship shall touch the rope. You will now return on board, sir, and, lest you shall prove unable to command your ship, an officer will be at hand to you who can."

Without another word, Captain Ellison instantly retired. After he had reached his ship he received orders that her guns were to be housed and secured, and that at daybreak in the morning her ports were to be lowered. A general order was then issued to the fleet for all launches to rendezvous under the *Prince* at seven o'clock on the following morning, armed with carronades[1]

[1] Carronades were invented by General Melville, and first cast at the Carron foundery in Scotland. They were short pieces with a large bore, light and easily handled, and destructive to timber at short ranges.

and twelve rounds of ammunition for service, each launch to be commanded by a lieutenant having an expert, a trusty gunner's mate, and four quarter-gunners, exclusive of the launch's crew, the whole to be under the command of Captain Campbell [1] of the *Blenheim*.

On presenting his orders to Captain Campbell, Lord St. Vincent told him that he was to attend the execution, and that, if any symptoms of mutiny appeared in the *Marlborough* or any attempt were made to open her ports, or any resistance offered to the hanging of the prisoner, he was to go close up to the ship, and to fire into her, and to continue his fire until all mutiny or resistance should cease, and that, should it become absolutely necessary, he should even sink the ship in face of the fleet.[2]

Accordingly, at seven the next morning, all the launches, manned and armed, proceeded from the *Prince* to the *Blenheim*, and thence to the *Marlborough*.

Having lain on his oars alongside for a short time, Captain Campbell formed his force in a line across the bows at less than pistol-shot distance, and proceeded to load the carronades.

At 7.30 the hands on board all the ships were turned up to witness punishment, and the eyes of the whole fleet were fixed upon the armed boat with the provost-marshal on board, in which the

[1] Nicknamed "Old Caliban."

[2] Tucker's *Memoir of St. Vincent*, vol. i. p. 307.

prisoner was being taken to the *Marlborough* for execution. It now remained to be seen whether the *Marlborough's* crew would hang the man.

At 8 a.m. the flagship fired a gun, and, after a slight delay caused by an accident, the man was hanged at the yard-arm, and St. Vincent was heard to say, "Discipline is preserved, sir!"

When the sentence had been carried out, and no disturbance had appeared, in order to prove to the fleet that sufficient force had been provided to overpower any resistance which a line-of-battle ship could offer, Captain Campbell broke his line of boats, and, moving down, placed his launches as close alongside the *Marlborough* as the oars would permit, and then, re-forming them, resumed his station across the bows until the man had been taken to sea and buried.

The *Marlborough* was then ordered to take her place in line. This incident proved to be a fatal blow to the mutiny before Cadiz. It is true that other cases of violent insubordination, treasonable conspiracy, and open resistance occurred, but they were instantly quelled. They happened for the most part in the ships which were constantly arriving from England, many of them in a state of open mutiny. No case of insubordination was overlooked, and instant punishment invariably followed; but never again, while St. Vincent held command, was the power of the law doubted.

CHAPTER X

THE BLOCKADE OF CADIZ AND THE EVENTS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

1797—1799

The well-being of all ultimately depends on the fidelity of each.—OTTLEY.

ALTHOUGH a detailed relation of all the painful occurrences of the mutiny would show Lord St. Vincent to have been especially fitted to command at that time, yet, as the accounts would all be very similar, I do not propose to weary the reader with them. One well-known case, however, which happened on board the *St. George*, may be mentioned here. The *St. George* had joined the fleet from England, with some prisoners in irons, and the mutiny on board her had been suppressed by the courage of Captain Peard. The court-martial which assembled pronounced sentence of death on a Saturday, and St. Vincent, in accordance with his decision to give effect to the sentence for mutiny awarded by a court-martial on the next morning, ordered it to be carried out on Sunday morning. Those who know what a mutiny in

a ship means will understand the imperative necessity for carrying out a sentence without delay. The danger of the mutiny spreading to other ships, when others would also suffer, makes it more truly merciful to let the punishment take place immediately, since its chief object is to serve as a *deterrent to others*. St. Vincent was much blamed by some for this act; but in a letter from Nelson written on July 9th, 1797, his action was approved of, for in it he says:

"I am sorry you should have occasion to differ with any of your admirals, but, had it been Christmas Day instead of Sunday, I would have executed them; your discipline is sure so far. I talked to our people, and, I hope, with good effect; indeed, they seem a very quiet set."

The case of the *London* shows the good effect of firm treatment on a ship's company. She was commanded by Captain John Child Purvis, and, shortly after the mutiny at Spithead, was sent out to join Lord St. Vincent's fleet, then in the Tagus. Her crew were known to be mutinous and disaffected to a great degree, and had carried their violence so far as to turn out of the ship Admiral Sir John Colpoys and all the officers, except Lieutenant Bover, whom they intended to hang. They had actually got the halter round his neck whilst he denounced them as base and dastardly traitors and cowards, and they only desisted from their intention because one of the delegates, standing near, happened to

remark that he "remembered Bover as a brave boy." When the ship left England she was in a state of open insubordination; on the very evening she sailed Captain Barrie had gone on board her in his gig to complain of the conduct of her launch's crew, when a shot was thrown into his boat with the intention of sinking her as she lay alongside. When the men were ordered to weigh and make sail they did so in a very sulky manner, murmuring audibly. As they approached St. Vincent's fleet, however, they seemed to reconsider matters, and began to *touch their caps* to their officers. When they arrived at Lisbon Captain Purvis went on board the *Ville de Paris* to report his arrival, and the *London's* boat, as was usual in the case of the boats of ships lately arrived from England, was ordered to lay off the ship. The strong tides made her drift again near the ship, and one of the boat's crew cried out to a man whose head had appeared at an open port, "I say, there, what have you fellows been doing out here while we have been fighting for your beef and pork?" The reply was not encouraging, "If you'll take my advice you'll just say nothing at all about all that here, for, by G—d, if old Jarvie hears you he'll have you dingle dangle at the yard-arm at 8 o'clock to-morrow morning." A few days after this the fleet returned to the station off Cadiz, and the *London* was placed abreast of the *Ville de Paris*.

Upon this the ship's company of the *Blenheim* forwarded a request to Rear-Admiral Frederick, whose flag she carried, that, having heard that the *London* was still refractory, they solicited the honour of going alongside her and teaching those fellows their duty and obedience. The Blenheims were thanked, but were informed that it was unnecessary. Indeed, in a week the *London's* crew had become as quiet as mice, and ever afterwards retained an excellent character; for none admire firmness, vigour, and courage more than the seamen themselves. During all this time, when St. Vincent was occupied in maintaining the discipline of the fleet—a task which required incessant care and watchfulness—his correspondence was enormous. Two letters only need be given here, one received from Nelson, and one from St. Vincent to the Marquis of Nizo at Lisbon.

"'THESEUS,'
"*May* 31*st*, 1797.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I never have a letter that the Duke of Clarence does not mention you. Perhaps you may think it right to take some notice of His Royal Highness's kind expressions. My best wishes and compliments attend the great Jervis. Tell him I admire him, I envy him, and I sincerely hope his fleet will fall in with the dollars.[1] A letter from a humble pen came to me at Gibraltar (Collingwood). His sentiments

[1] An allusion to the expedition to Teneriffe, where the galleons were expected.

are those, I am confident, of the whole fleet, viz., I have a great desire our admiral should be a marquis this summer. His bright honours will reflect on all of us.

"Your most faithful

"HORATIO NELSON."

"*To the Marquis de Nizo*

"*December* 1797.

"SIR,

"With reference to Monsieur Durepaire, late an officer in the regiment of Montmartre, and the brave Garde de Corps, who so nobly and gallantly preserved for a time the life of the Queen of France by falling, covered with wounds, defending the door of Her Majesty's antechamber at Versailles when attacked by a band of ruffians, hired by the Duke of Orleans to assassinate the King and Queen. He is now reduced to a pittance owing to a reform the Government have made in our Army. Princes alone have the means to place him in a suitable career. I am ready and willing to settle an annuity on him, out of my private purse.

"ST. VINCENT."

With the exception of the in-shore squadron, St. Vincent's fleet spent the winter of 1797 at Lisbon, while the Spanish fleet lay dismantled in the inner harbour of Cadiz; but before they were ready to come out in the spring of 1798 St. Vincent was again off Rota. The Spaniards occasionally made signs of moving, but did not venture out, being apparently quite paralysed by the presence of the British fleet.

France now began to collect a large force in Toulon, the destination of which was kept secret, and the British Government, becoming alarmed, wrote to St. Vincent asking him to keep a watch on the French and find out the object of the force in question. He realised that it was once more necessary that a British force should appear in the Mediterranean,[1] and the question arose as to which of the three subordinate flag-officers then with the fleet before Cadiz he should send in command of it. Lord Spencer had written to him, that "upon his selection the fate of Europe may be stated to depend." He had also written in a letter dated April 29th, 1798:

"If you determine to send a detachment, I think it almost unnecessary to suggest to you the propriety of putting it under the command of Sir Horatio Nelson, whose acquaintance with that part of the world, as well as his activity and disposition, seem to qualify him in a peculiar manner for that service."

It is certain that letters crossed between Lord St. Vincent and Lord Spencer, both selecting the same officer. Lord Minto, who had been Viceroy of Corsica, wrote as follows to Sir Horatio Nelson on April 28th, 1798:

"I took a step yesterday which perhaps I ought not to have hazarded without authority,

[1] The object of having a force in the Mediterranean must always be that there is in that sea a hostile fleet which may have to be fought.

but I took care to leave the responsibility on myself, by declaring, in the strongest manner, that I neither had nor could have any instructions or authority from you, on the occasion. Having had reason to believe that Government were at last thinking seriously about the Mediterranean, I went to Lord Spencer and told him that I could not refrain from suggesting what had probably occurred to himself: that you were the fittest man in the world *for that command.* I told him that I took that liberty with the less scruple as I was better acquainted with some of your qualifications for such a service than he or most other men could have had an opportunity of being. That everybody knew you as an officer, and his lordship was probably apprised that you *were as well acquainted with the Mediterranean* as he was with the room in which we were sitting; but that I had had the best opportunities of knowing other points which qualified you particularly for the command in that sea; that you had proved yourself quick and sharp with the enemy where you had just cause of offence, but, on the other hand, you possessed the spirit of conciliation with all neutral or friendly Powers, in a no less remarkable degree. That if your name was dreaded by the enemy it inspired confidence in all others, and that you were thoroughly exercised in that communication between the Courts and Powers in the Mediterranean which must always be one of the most important branches of the duty committed to the commander of a squadron in that sea. I added also, that your disposition to consult confidentially, and to act in concert and harmony with those on shore had been conspicuous on every occasion, and had contributed in a very eminent degree to the good of the service, and to my own unspeakable comfort

in the constant intercourse between us, which our duty had required during my service abroad. Lord Spencer said that if the measure I attended to were taken, he might venture to assure me that there was no chance of any other person being thought of for the command, and that your name would certainly have been the first to have occurred to himself. That there would be the less doubt of your being appointed as it would naturally be left to Lord St. Vincent to name the officer, and that I knew his high opinion of you. He added, however, that, in writing to Lord St. Vincent on the subject, while he left the nomination to him, he should express his own opinion that you are the proper man. It is right to say, however, that the measure itself does not seem to be thoroughly determined on, and the greatest secrecy seems, at all events, essential on the subject. Twelve sail of the line, I understand, are thought of for this squadron; the immediate object would be to encourage and assist Naples in resisting the impending attack, but it is feared, and not without reason, that here, as on so many other occasions, our aid will come too late. However, we should still do what is possible, while a chance of good remains. Independent of this particular object, I believe Government now feels the propriety of checking the enemy's maritime dominion in the Mediterranean, and not leaving the whole of that great world entirely at the mercy of France and of all her extraordinary, or, if you please, extravagant views. Whether twelve ships will enable you to keep the French at home or to find work for them there, you are a better judge than me. In the meantime I own I wish most anxiously to see the twelve ships under your command.

"Lord Spencer, at the close of the conversation,

thanked me for mentioning this subject, though his opinion was exactly the same with mine (I mean in what relates to you), and said he should be very glad to receive any other suggestion I might think useful on a matter on which he supposed me likely to be well informed.

"In consequence of this encouragement, I wrote to him the same evening to recommend the employment of two bomb-ketches in this squadron, and I said that I knew that you thought this a material point, and that the reasons for it appeared to me stronger now than ever. I also recommended as great a proportion of marines or troops as possible, as the want of friendly ports might make it necessary to land occasionally (for water and other purposes) when some force might be requisite. I am conscious that, in taking so much on myself on so delicate a point, I hazarded a good deal; but you will at least discover two motives, neither of which I trust you will disapprove of. First a sincere zeal for the *public service*, especially in that quarter, and secondly an anxious concern for all that relates to the honours and fortunes, or wishes of one who, I hope, will let me call him friend, as long as we both live. I need not say how confidential this letter is, but I never wish to have any secrets from Lord St. Vincent, and you will, therefore, do what you think proper, in communicating with him what I have written. I fear that vile, unaccountable palsy in the fingers and thumb of my right hand, with which you know I have been afflicted since my return to England, has sunk me many pegs in the esteem of Lord St. Vincent, and probably has deprived me of a portion of that regard which was one of my greatest prides. However, I shall hope to regain that ground the loss of which I must no doubt

seem to have deserved, but have not really merited by any inconstancy in my sentiments towards him. If you can throw in a saving word or two in that quarter you will do me a great kindness.[1]

"Believe me ever, my dear sir,
"Your most affectionate and faithful
"MINTO."

One cannot doubt that Nelson was in every way the most fitting person for the task—if only because of his knowledge of the situation, which he had previously so fittingly filled in a junior capacity. Nevertheless, his appointment by Lord St. Vincent occasioned a vast amount of enmity, vexation, and annoyance to the admiral. This was all the more unpleasant to bear because those who were disappointed at being passed over were supported by the rules and customs of the service, and when Sir Horatio missed the French fleet in his chase to Egypt the discontent extended beyond Cadiz and became manifest in England also.

Now it so happened, that Rear-Admiral Sir John Orde, who was senior to Nelson, had had differences of opinion with his chief, who was undoubtedly inclined to be extremely obstinate when opposed, and especially so at this particular moment, owing to the difficulties he had been passing through. In his treatment of Sir John Orde, therefore, he was most probably provoked into an error. The first point of differ-

[1] The letter was sent by Sir Horatio Nelson to Lord St. Vincent.

ence arose when a launch belonging to Sir John Orde's ship, the *St. George*, had been captured one night by the Spaniards. St. Vincent thereupon issued an order that "only lieutenants of approved firmness should be selected to command these boats in the future." The Earl had also made a mistake in rebuking Sir John for sending him a letter, which afterwards turned out to have been written by another officer, and, although on this occasion he apologised to the Rear-Admiral, it left a sore. When Sir John found that the command in the Mediterranean had been given to Nelson, an officer junior to himself; he wrote a letter of complaint to Lord Spencer, but received no encouragement from the Admiralty.

Owing to the bad temper shown by Sir John, and the friction it caused in the fleet, St. Vincent determined to get rid of him, and ordered him to proceed home in the *Blenheim*. Sir John sent a written remonstrance to his chief. Thereupon St. Vincent wrote him the following trenchant reply:

"SIR,

"I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated off Cadiz August 3rd, expressed in terms of insubordination that even *in these times* I did not expect to receive from an officer of your rank.

"I am, sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"ST. VINCENT."

In obedience to his order, Sir John Orde proceeded home and reported himself to the Admiralty.

Soon afterwards St. Vincent received a letter from the Admiralty.

"ADMIRALTY,
"*October 13th*, 1798.

"MY LORD,

"I have received, and communicated to my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, your letter of August 30th acquainting me, for their Lordships' information, that Rear-Admiral Sir John Orde, having very much interrupted you in the discharge of your public duty by attempts to force you into a correspondence of a nature highly derogatory to the discipline and subordination of His Majesty's Navy, and the state of the *Blenheim* requiring that she should be in an English port before the approach of winter, you had directed the Rear-Admiral to proceed in that ship to Lisbon and thence to England, under the rules therein referred to.

"I have their lordships' command to acquaint your lordship in answer thereto, that they can by no means approve of your having sent home Sir John Orde, as the reasons given for doing so do not appear sufficient to justify the sending a flag-officer to England, it being at all times in your lordship's power to put a stop to any correspondence which you might think to be improper; they are, therefore, pleased to direct that you do not in future send home any officers that may be under your command without receiving instructions from their lordships to do so, unless some very strong and some very peculiar circumstances should make it absolutely necessary. His Majesty's ship *Blenheim* arrived

in the Downs with her convoy yesterday, previously to which their lordships had received complaints from Sir John Orde of his having been treated by your lordship in a manner unsuitable to his rank and situation in the fleet, and desiring that your lordship might be brought to a court-martial. This request, however, their lordships have not thought fit to comply with, and have directed me to assure you of their determination to support your lordship in the fullest manner, in every proper exercise of your authority, not doubting that you will see the necessity of showing every proper degree of attention and of giving every proper degree of support to the flag-officers serving under your orders, that that *regular chain of command and obedience, of superiority and subordination, may be perfectly preserved in all ranks*, without which it is impossible that true discipline can exist.

"I have the honour to be,

"EVAN NEPEAN, Secretary."

St. Vincent replied to this letter as follows:

"'LE SOUVERAIN,' GIBRALTAR,
"*December 5th*, 1798.

"SIR,

"I submit to the rebuke the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty have thought fit to convey to me for sending Rear-Admiral Sir John Orde to England without their lordships' authority to do so; but my pride of character is very much wounded by the censure contained in the latter half of your letter of October 12th, *denying positively, as I do*, having ever treated him or any other officer under my command improperly, even when there were meetings and combinations to resist the regulations I found it absolutely necessary to make to preserve

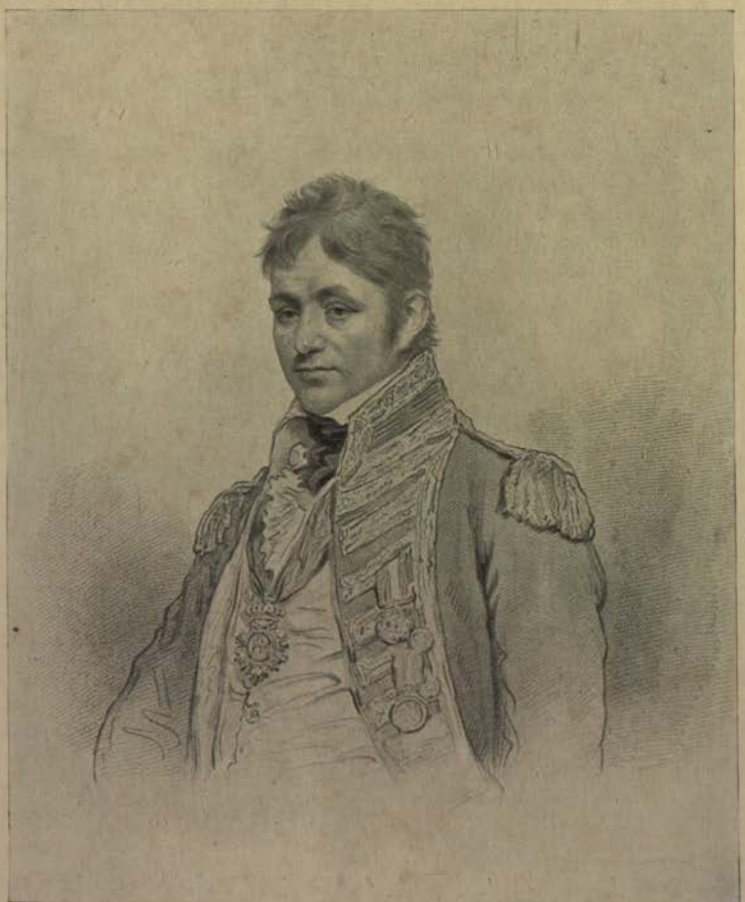
His Majesty's fleet under my command from the disgrace it has suffered in other regions, and I am bold to affirm that nothing short of the measures I have taken could have succeeded, and I therefore desire that you will state to their lordships the extreme injury my reputation suffers by a sentence passed upon me without being heard in my defence. I am, sir,

"Your most obedient humble servant,

"ST. VINCENT."

St. Vincent did perhaps exceed his authority in sending Sir John Orde home, but in view of all the circumstances, and considering the vital necessity for willing and cheerful subordination to authority in the interests of the State, and the disgraceful state of affairs at home, where Admiral Duncan had been deserted by some of his ships, and when one remembers that the climax, if not the cause, of Sir John's disaffection was due to the selection of Nelson for the Mediterranean command, one is not surprised at St. Vincent removing from the fleet, in the presence of the enemy, an officer of high rank who had shown himself to be openly disaffected. Here the matter may rest for the present.

The ships comprising the in-shore squadron under Troubridge—known as the "chosen band"—were kept always "instantly ready" for sea, their water being filled up twice a day, and, when Sir Roger Curtis was sighted from the masthead of the admiral's ship on his arrival with reinforcements, the squadron put to sea,



REAR-ADMIRAL SIR THOMAS TROUBRIDGE, BART.

From a print lent by Messrs. T. H. Parker, printsellers, 45, Whitcomb St., London.

and were soon out of sight on their way to Gibraltar to join Nelson's squadron. Meanwhile St. Vincent had devised a scheme for the attack and taking of Minorca. The Government had collected a large body of troops at Lisbon under General Sir Charles Stuart, and there they remained at great cost and with nothing to do. A letter was sent to St. Vincent asking if he could suggest any expedition in which they could be used with effect; to which he replied that, "Taking possession of Minorca is an object of great facility, but to retain it afterwards will require the constant protection of a squadron." As an alternative he suggested the taking of Cartagena with these troops. The Government approved of his suggestion to use the troops in taking Minorca, and St. Vincent therefore decided to go to Gibraltar in order to superintend the equipment of the expedition.

Just at this time, when Popery was being assailed by the philosophers and armies of France, and when, as Macaulay says, "Even sagacious observers thought that at length the hour of the Church of Rome was come," Spain, who remained faithful to her creed, even at the risk of causing war with the French, offered an asylum to Pope Pius VI., who was at that time the head of the Roman Catholic Church. Chivalrous as the Spaniards were themselves, they looked for the same chivalrous conduct on the part of St. Vincent, in spite of the fact that

the nations were enemies at the time. The correspondence between Don José de Mazzaredo and St. Vincent shows the stately and old-world courtesy with which the negotiations were conducted.

"PURISIMA CONCEPCION, CADIZ,
"*June* 11*th*, 1798.

"MOST EXCELLENT SIR,

"I have the honour to acquaint your Excellency that I am ordered by the King, my master, to communicate to you that His Majesty has determined that His Holiness Pope Pius VI. shall come into Spain, and that he means to send to Italy one ship of the line, a frigate, and a small armed vessel which will sail from Cartagena for the purpose of conveying His Holiness in a suitable manner, and in his royal name. I am directed to solicit of your Excellency a safe passport for this division of ships that, during their voyage upon this business, they may not be molested in going or coming by any of His Britannic Majesty's forces, and I am also to agree with your Excellency respecting the proper signals to be made, in case of their meeting by day or night.

"Having informed your Excellency of this business I wait for your answer, which I shall transmit to the King, my master, and I hope that you will be pleased to concur with His Majesty's intentions and second his wishes, in causing that the voyage of His Holiness may be free from any hostile molestation. I repeat to your Excellency my highest consideration and esteem, and sincere desire to render you any service.

"God guard you many years!

"Your Excellency's most obedient servant,

"JOSÉ DE MAZZAREDO."

"*To Don José De Mazzaredo*

"'VILLE DE PARIS,' OFF CADIZ,
"*June* 11*th*, 1798.

"SIR,

"I am honoured with your Excellency's letter of this date, and shall be proud to assist in the execution of the pious design of His Catholic Majesty in respect of His Holiness the Pope. I not only will furnish the necessary passports but will direct Rear-Admiral Nelson to give a powerful escort to the Spanish ships of war destined for this service. I will thank your Excellency to put the nautical terms relative to the signals proper to be observed on this important occasion into French, as we are all very ignorant of those in Spanish. Perhaps it would be asking too much to permit Mr. Archdecken to purchase and send off to me a nautical dictionary in the Spanish language, which may greatly facilitate the correspondence I am so frequently honoured with.

"I have the honour to be, with great esteem and regard,

"Your Excellency's most obedient
"and very humble servant,
"ST. VINCENT."

St. Vincent arrived at Gibraltar in October, and placed the naval forces for the expedition to Minorca under the command of Commodore Duckworth. The preparations were made very quickly in order to create the impression that the expedition was intended for a distant part of the world. The troops under Sir Charles Stuart having arrived at Gibraltar and the

squadron being provided with provisions and stores, which were put on board the transports, the agent victualler waited upon Lord St. Vincent, who was staying at headquarters with General O'Hara, and, having reported that everything in his department was finished, was permitted to retire to rest in his house in Rosia Bay. Almost immediately afterwards the Town Major came to inform the general that a Spanish spy from San Roque had been discovered in the garrison, trying to ascertain the destination of the expedition, and chiefly to find out for what length of voyage it had been victualled, and asked how the spy should be dealt with. The governor's first impulse was to have him seized and imprisoned, but St. Vincent exclaimed: "Do not, my dear general, for the world, disturb him. Let him go to whatever part of the garrison he wishes. It will be hard indeed if you and I do not only prove ourselves a match for a Spanish spy, but do not turn his visit to our good account"; and, whilst saying this, he rang the bell and begged that a messenger might be sent to recall Mr. Tucker (the Agent Victualler) at once. The general assented, wondering what would be the result, and said, "My lord, you will be the death of the poor man!" "No, no," said St. Vincent, "work does him good, he will thrive on it." An orderly-sergeant was despatched in great haste, and found Mr. Tucker in bed, tired out by a hard day's work. A sharp

tap at his bedroom window, on the ground floor, aroused him, and he was told that the Commander-in-Chief wanted him immediately. Speedily retracing his steps, he found the admiral and general with their coats off in close conference.

"Mr. Tucker," said Lord St. Vincent, "I have been considering much the service which is to be performed by the expedition which is to sail to-morrow, and I doubt whether the supply of twelve months' provisions which we have given will be sufficient. I am therefore anxious to increase it to eighteen months."

"My lord," replied Mr. Tucker, "we have not enough left in the stores to do so; they are nearly cleared out."

"Very true! but let us hear what expedients you can suggest, Mr. Tucker, and see what your resources are."

The agent replied: "There is a vessel in the bay laden with flour. Some sugar, raisins, and rice may probably be purchased on the Rock, and, with the remains of wine and biscuit in the naval stores and a supply of peas and pork from the Commissariat, this might suffice to carry out your wishes."

"Very good, sir! Let it be done the first thing in the morning."

"I shall be ready to issue all we have in hand at daylight, if your lordship will afford me a strong working-party to assist in delivering

them. Your lordship is aware I have no labourers."

"You cannot have either man or boat from the squadron, sir, for all will be engaged in embarking the troops and military stores."

"Well, then, my lord, I must hope for a little assistance from the general, and trust to the Jews."

"The Jews! What do you mean by 'the Jews,' sir?"

"Why, my lord, there are a great number of that nation daily employed by the merchants in shipping and landing their goods. They all live in the same quarter of the town, and if the general will lend an officer and a few soldiers to enforce the help of the Israelites, I propose to lay them under contribution to the public service."

The general was exceedingly amused, and readily assented, and the chief exclaimed: "All Judea shall be at your disposal, sir."

This difficulty having been got over, the agent added that there was one other request he must make, which was that boats might be available to ship the stores on their arrival at the waterside. "I have before told you that the services of the boats are already appropriated," replied the chief.

"Well then, my lord, as it seems I can get no assistance from the fleet, I must request that the general will assist with boats from the garrison."

General O'Hara regretted that every boat in the garrison would be fully employed in shipping the stores, ammunition, and baggage.

"Will the general afford me another official guard?" was the reply.

It was then arranged that this force should be at the sally-port, awaiting the rush of merchant-boatmen who swarmed there at the opening of the gates at daylight, and that, as soon as there were two men in each boat, they should be detained.

Accordingly, at daylight, Jews, boatmen, and boats were all detained, collected under duress, amidst a clamour of tongues of all nations, vowing their indignation, until it was explained to them that they should all be liberally paid, but that work they must, owing to the urgency of the case.

Convinced by these arguments, and looking forward to the Government payment, they one and all buckled to and everything proceeded with great expedition. The spy was also present observing all the hurry and bustle, and of course St. Vincent was there, watching the whole business. He was much amused by seeing all obstacles overcome—and felt sure that the large preparations would deceive the Spanish spy. Gun after gun was fired to enforce the signal to weigh, the chief constantly pressing for despatch, and exclaiming that, if the fleet did not soon sail, they would lose the Levanter (easterly wind)

now blowing, thus further strengthening the impression that the expedition was about to sail for the westward.

By close of the day the fleet were under sail, and, completely deceived, the spy departed with his false information.

The orders were to keep over to the African shore, and that no rendezvous was to be given out until off Ceuta and out of view of Gibraltar.

By the following morning the wind had shifted to the west and the whole fleet was out of sight. A month after they sailed St. Vincent received the *news that Minorca had been taken without the loss of a single man.* The Spanish authorities, misled by their spy, imagined that the fleet had left for some distant place in the west, after being filled up with a large store of provisions. And consequently, although the Spanish had plenty of troops at Barcelona, they sent no reinforcements to Minorca, being lulled into security by St. Vincent's manœuvre.

A source of considerable annoyance to Lord St. Vincent at this time, and more so to Nelson, was the appointment from home of Sir Sidney Smith to a separate command in the Mediterranean. By a little mistake, or ambiguity on the part of the Admiralty, in appointing Sir Sidney to serve independently in Sir Horatio Nelson's command, both he and the Commander-in-Chief were ignored; but the latter knew too well the rules of the service to let Sir Sidney slip through

his hands. All his anxiety was respecting the feelings of Nelson. On this subject he thus writes to Lord Spencer from Gibraltar:

"An arrogant letter written by Sir Sidney Smith to Sir William Hamilton, when he joined the squadron forming the blockade of Malta, has wounded Rear-Admiral Nelson to the quick (as per enclosed) who besides feels himself affronted by his embassy, and *separate command*, which compels me to put this strange man immediately under his lordship's orders, or the King may be deprived of his (Nelson's) important services and those of many valuable officers, as superior to Sir Sidney Smith in all points as he is to the most ordinary of men. I experienced a trait of the presumptuous character of this young man during his short stay at Gibraltar, which I passed over that it might not appear to your lordship that I was governed by prejudice in my conduct towards him." [1]

Nelson, in fact, had good reason to be dissatisfied with Sir Sidney Smith, who is stated to have commenced his command before Alexandria by counteracting the system laid down by his lordship—a system "which always," says St. Vincent, "appeared to me fraught with the most consummate wisdom"—and he adds, "My only apprehension is that Sir Sidney Smith, enveloped in the importance of his ambassadorial character, will not attend to the practical part of his military profession."

[1] Brenton, *Life of St. Vincent*, p. 464.

Lord St. Vincent, for the first time, in a letter to Lord Nelson, complains of his health and cause of dissatisfaction from home:

"*May* 1798.

"I am not well, and have great cause of dissatisfaction from higher quarters. He [Sir Sidney Smith] has no authority whatever to wear a distinguishing pendant unless you authorise him, for I certainly shall not. Your lordship will, therefore exercise your discretion on the subject, and every other within the limits of your command. I have sent a copy of the orders you judged expedient to give Sir Sidney Smith (which I highly approve) to Lord Spencer, with my remarks, for I foresee both you and I shall be drawn into a *tracasserie* about this gentleman, who, having the ear of ministers and telling his story better than we can, will be more attended to."

And shortly after, in another letter to Nelson he says:

"I fancy ministers at home disapprove of Sir Sidney Smith's conduct at Constantinople, for, in a confidential letter to me, a remark is made that our new allies have not much reason to be satisfied with it. The man's head is completely turned with vanity and self-importance. Lady Hamilton has described him admirably in a letter to me. Lord Spencer is so wrapped up in him that he cannot avoid expressing displeasure at the statements I have made of his behaviour to us both, considering all my observations as arising from prejudice." [2]

[1] Brenton, *Life of St. Vincent*, pp. 13, 14. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

It is due to Sir Sidney Smith, however, to state here that the memorable defence of Acre, with small means, against the overwhelming force of Bonaparte, entitles him to the gratitude of the British nation.

Meanwhile Nelson had been busy following Bonaparte in his expedition to Egypt, and we may be sure that he occupied a very prominent place in St. Vincent's thoughts and arrangements. The whole squadron detached for service under Nelson and De Saumarez had been specially selected by him. It was the pick of the fleet, and consisted entirely of ships that he had trained to a high state of efficiency. In De Saumarez's account he says:

"The French armament sailed from Toulon five days before Captain Troubridge left Lord St. Vincent. The day we left Naples the French fleet left Malta, and it was not until we arrived off that island, six days after, that we heard of it being taken, and that the French fleet had left it, and we had no intimation where they were going. The English fleet arrived at Alexandria before the French, and, not finding them there, sailed for Naples."

But when off Candia they discovered that the French had passed, landed the troops, and taken possession of Alexandria and of Cairo, and that their fleet was lying in Aboukir Bay. Discovered there, they were attacked at anchor, and the great victory of the Nile followed, an

account of which must be sought in the life of Nelson. The *Culloden* unfortunately ran aground on a shoal, and Troubridge, who was in command of her, wrote a letter to his chief on August 16th, 1798, which shows how confident all his captains were that they could rely on St. Vincent's sympathy in disaster, so long as they were doing their best to carry out the work that was given them.

"Your lordship will have heard, by Sir Horatio Nelson's letter and Captain Berry of the misfortune which befell the *Culloden* just as I got within gunshot of the enemy. As we had no knowledge of the place, and the soundings were regular as we stood in, I did not conceive the smallest danger, the man at the lead calling out eleven fathoms as we struck. The only consolation I have to support me in this cruel case is, I had just time to make the signal to the *Swiftsure* and *Alexandria*, which saved them, or they must inevitably have been lost, as they would have been farther on the reef, as they were considerably inside me. I trust Sir Horatio has done me the justice to say it was an unavoidable accident, and that every exertion in my power was used to save the ship. It was for long doubtful whether I should be able to keep her afloat after I got her off, the rudder gone, and making seven feet of water an hour. However, the third day we got a new rudder made and hung, and, with thrummed sails, reduced the leak considerably. The false keel is gone, and probably part of the main as she struck very hard for nine hours with a very heavy swell. All the gripe is off. This unfor-

tunate business has, I fear, almost finished the poor *Culloden*, for this war; however, I flatter myself *I can still fight a good battle in her if opportunity offers. I shall use every exertion to patch her up.*"

How this must have delighted his friend St. Vincent! Then he goes on to say:

"This stroke may induce the French to moderate terms of peace, particularly as their army in Egypt is in a bad way, harassed by the Mamelukes and Bedouins and in want of everything. I took a courier of Bonaparte with all the letters. They seem to be all written in a desponding style, many of these, I believe, Sir Horatio sent to your lordship. Tallien, who is here with all his outcasts, says Barras and all his party will now be turned out. This reverse of fortune is what Bonaparte has not before experienced. A great discontent prevails. All the letters from both officers and soldiers curse the expedition, and are wishing themselves back in France. Their state in Alexandria is truly bad. The canal which fills the tanks at that place where the Nile overflows is not yet open, and I am told that Europeans cannot stand the heat and fatigue. The Arabs who used to perform this work are gone to join the different Beys they belong to in the Delta, to oppose the enemy, and all the water they have at present is brought by camels, at a great expense; the consumption is enormous. Upwards of 400 sail transports and merchant-ships in the harbour, besides the numerous inhabitants, soldiers, etc., that I much doubt if the camels can supply them all. If we can intercept their convoys which they expect with provisions, they will be starved.

Not one of the captured ships had more than a week's provisions in them, and water was the only food the sailors had, with a small proportion of bread. *Our lads would not be very quiet on such scanty allowance.* Not a drop of wine and spirits in their army; they extract a kind of wine or spirit from dates and drink it immediately. This is all they have to support them in their fatigue. I was so fatigued and distressed at my misfortune that I had not time or spirits to write by the *Leander* or *Mutine* which I trust you will accept as an apology.

"I am now working hard at the leak. *I must and will make the 'Culloden' last as long as your lordship has the command.* The first harbour I get into I must patch her up. I think, by a little exertion, I shall succeed. Two pumps going I shall not mind. We are fully equal to that. I endeavour, and I think succeed, in making the men believe that the leak is nothing —for they dance every evening as usual, so that the exercise keeps them in health."

This letter must have been one after St. Vincent's heart, for it showed the writer's determination to do his utmost to keep his ship always ready for active service. Nelson made no special mention of any of his officers in his despatches, but treated them all alike, following the example set in his chief's report of the battle of St. Vincent. De Saumarez, his second in command, who had greatly distinguished himself in both battles, and had been wounded at the Nile, was despatched, with six ships of the line and five prizes, to report himself to the

Commander-in-Chief. He appeared at Gibraltar just before the expedition to Minorca sailed, and was received with acclamation. St. Vincent, delighted with Nelson's success, determined at once to repair all the ships damaged in the battle of the Nile, without their leaving the station. Tucker, who had been appointed his secretary, gives a picturesque account of St. Vincent's activity at this time.

"An autumn ant-hill would not badly represent the Rock of Gibraltar at that period. It swarmed with life and diligence. Not a spot in which important work of some kind or another was not going on, not an individual that was not hastening on some urgent business to be done *immediately*, and the efforts that were made for England in that place were enormous. The chief was in all his glory. His master-mind directed everything, and comprehended all details. No variety of employment was beyond the reach of his diversity of talent. In spite of failing health and approaching age, his application and his industry in business were extraordinary. Generally up till two o'clock in the morning reading and writing his letters, his last question to his secretary was, 'Now, sir, *have I done all my work for the day*?' and, unless the reply was in the affirmative, he never retired to rest. He was about, as daylight dawned, to see that the watch was properly kept, afloat and ashore. He was in the dockyard before the gates were opened to see that all started work punctually, or at the ragged staff to see what water had been collected in the night for the use of the fleet; or he was walking round the jetty to which the ships

were lashed to see that all were busy. As he had requested that an order should be given that no sentry should salute him, he was able to go round unobserved."

During the whole of this business of the repairs of the ships he displayed remarkable skill in all matters connected with the sea, backed up by a profound knowledge of human nature. The prizes were soon patched up sufficiently to proceed home, but the repairs of our ships which had taken part in the battle of the Nile were much more serious, for the chief was determined to restore them all to a state of perfect seaworthiness before they left Gibraltar. On the arrival of these ships their officers and crews had met with an enthusiastic reception, not only from the Commander-in-Chief and General O'Hara, but from all the community of the Rock as well. But although the band specially selected by St. Vincent had thus amply justified his choice, he was not the man to allow them to rest on their laurels while the country was still at war. He felt it to be of the utmost importance that the ships which had behaved so well should not be allowed to leave a strategic point, such as Gibraltar was at that time, until every one of them was ready for active service.

The fact that they might speedily be wanted again was not the sole consideration that weighed with him. He was anxious to prove to the enemy, not only that the ships had not been

completely disabled in the action, but also that injuries such as they had received could, and would, be made good at Gibraltar, and that the superiority of the British lay not merely in fighting, but in seamanlike efficiency as well. If there had been fresh reinforcements in England ready to take the place of the disabled ships, whilst they proceeded home to refit, the case might have been different, but this was not so. One cannot too much admire St. Vincent for acting as he did, and the difficulties and opposition he met with merely served to show him once more determined as ever to carry out what he considered to be *his duty to the State*, however unpopular it might be.

Now, Captain D'Esterre Darby, of the *Bellerophon*, had particularly distinguished himself at the Nile by engaging the powerful three-decker, *L'Orient*, though his was only a 74-gun ship. The *Bellerophon* was so much damaged that she could hardly be kept afloat, and when her captain arrived at Gibraltar he had received a very great deal of notice and admiration. Lord St. Vincent especially had made much of him, frequently calling him aside at the great dinners given in honour of the occasion. But Darby was most anxious to get to England and receive the congratulations awaiting him there, as were his officers and crew. When he found that St. Vincent meant to repair his ship at Gibraltar he was greatly disappointed, and gave vent to

his displeasure in somewhat unmeasured terms, not only in private, but at army messes and at public gatherings. He talked of how hard it was for a ship to be kept on a station, when no proper means could be found of rendering her seaworthy there; declared that, to use a common expression, a post-chaise might be driven through her sides, they had suffered so much; and that he did not know who would fight the country's battles if, after behaving as his fellows had, they were to be sent to sea to be drowned for it afterwards. Now, it was impossible for remarks of this kind to be made in a small place like Gibraltar without their soon reaching the ears of the Commander-in-Chief. At first he took no notice of them, hoping that they would soon cease; but, finding that they were causing some sensation in the garrison, and were likely to be subversive of discipline, and being, as usual, more determined than ever to carry out his purpose no matter how impossible other people might deem it, he resolved to remove this particular impediment in his own kind but at the same time forcible and decisive manner. There happened to be a grand dinner-party at the general's, at which St. Vincent and several of the Nile heroes were present, and St. Vincent was, as usual, very marked in his graciousness to Captain Darby.

When they separated for the night the chief returned to his house in Rosia Bay and Captain

Darby to his lodging near the Mole, to which the *Bellerophon* was secured. Not long after he had gone to sleep he was awakened by a tapping at his window. Annoyed at being disturbed, he gave a very gruff reply, but, as the knocking continued, he got up and asked, "Who's there?" and the voice that replied was easily recognisable.

"It is I, it is I, my dear Darby. Get up; I have something to say to you."

"Oh, my lord, is it you? Why, we have only just parted," was the answer in a sleepy voice.

"I know that, Darby, but I am always thinking of you; and I have had a dream about you which I must tell you, for till I have told it to you I cannot rest. So get up, and come over to the window and hear it."

"Well, my lord, I hope it is a short one, for I am uncommonly sleepy."

The window being opened, with Captain Darby in his night-shirt inside, and Lord St. Vincent in full dress bending from the outside, the following conversation took place.

"Darby, I dreamt I was looking on at the battle of the Nile, and of all our ships the *Bellerophon* most attracted my admiration. I saw her alongside the mighty *L'Orient*, nobly supporting a conflict quite unrivalled in our naval history, and then I exclaimed, 'Look at Darby there! what a fine, gallant fellow he is! What a matchless hero!' and, Darby, I dreamt that I watched you there, obstinately continuing

that unequal fight, till, two of your lieutenants being killed, and 200 of your crew being killed or wounded, I saw yourself knocked down by a splinter, and the *Bellerophon* drifting past her enormous opponent; and then I said, 'What an incomparable hero that Darby is! How proud I am of the choice I made of him! how greatly will England approve of my selection!' After that, Darby, my dream changed, and I was here again on the Rock, and some one told me that when, instead of going to England, you received my orders to repair your ship here, you said, 'it was quite impossible, for there were not enough shipwrights on the Rock, that it is notorious she can hardly swim, that people said a post-chaise might go through her, and that you did not know who would fight the battles of the country if, after fighting as your fellows had done, they were sent to sea to be drowned afterwards!' and I replied 'Why, surely, it cannot be the gallant Darby who has said all this? Is he turned chicken-hearted? I can't believe it. 'Tis impossible!'"

Bursting with impatience, Captain Darby exclaimed, "Good God! my lord, what do you mean by such terms?"

"But," continued St. Vincent calmly, "remember this is only my dream, Darby. Yet, they told me that you not only said all this among the officers of the squadron, but at the army messes too, and moreover they men-

tioned who had heard you; and I was indeed astonished and aggrieved. But then, Darby, my dream changed, and I thought I was at a court-martial, *and Darby, do you know, it was your sword that lay on the table!* Now, remember this was only my dream, Darby, but now I have told you I hope I shall be able to rest. So, good-night!" and, shutting the window, the chief departed, leaving Captain Darby no longer sleepy.

On the following day a large party dined with Lord St. Vincent, but Captain Darby, who either had not quite recovered from the loss of sleep, or not forgiven the disturbance, was unusually silent. This did not escape the notice of St. Vincent. "Where's Darby?" he called out. "Why, Darby, you appear out of spirits. I fear you must be brooding over that dream of mine; come, let's have a glass of wine together."

"Indeed, my lord, replied the captain, "there's no knowing where to have your lordship, for you have a tongue like a cow." Whilst everybody else sat aghast at the temerity of this answer, St. Vincent said, "How so? how so, Darby?" "Because, my lord, you have a rough and a smooth side to it."

"Ah, Darby, you're always playing off your jokes on me; but never mind, it was only a dream. Here's to you, Darby!"

It need not be added that the hint was effectual, and Darby no longer spoke rashly in the various

messes, but privately in conversation with his chief he would still maintain the difficulties of repairing his ship; whilst St. Vincent insisted that it not only could be done but that it should be done, and gave the exact date and time by which she would be finished.

"Why, it is impossible, my lord. As it is, we are short here of artificers, but it would take a ship-load of carpenters to fish her masts and make her hull seaworthy."

"Nevertheless, I think it will come to pass, Darby," replied St. Vincent.

A day or two afterwards, on Captain Darby's visiting the dockyard, his ears were astonished by an unusual clatter of caulkers and carpenters from his own ship. Lord St. Vincent had despatched a brig to the fleet off Cadiz for two shipwrights from every ship of the line, and now, having reached the dockyard before the captain of the ship, he greeted him with, "Well, Darby, half my prophecy is fulfilled; the ship-load of carpenters has arrived, and I foretell that the *Bellerophon* will go out on the appointed day." Still Captain Darby was sceptical; the hold was unstowed, the mizzen-mast on shore, and the repairs yet to be done were considerable. Efforts were redoubled, and, on the morning fixed for the *Bellerophon's* departure, whilst Darby was breakfasting with the admiral, he started at hearing a gun fired from the flag-ship.

"That gun, my dear Darby, is for the boats

of the fleet to assist in towing out the *Bellerophon*," said the chief.

"But the mizzen-mast is not stepped, my lord, and the rigging has not yet been received from the dockyard," answered Darby.

"That will be alongside as soon as your ship is anchored in the bay." Another gun fired. "There's another gun, for *you*, Darby!" and the guns continued to fire until the ship was cast off, and had left the Mole, and the chief's prophecy was fulfilled to the letter.

And thus, thanks to the genius of the Commander-in-Chief, which infused and inspired life and vigour into every department, the whole Nile squadron was repaired without a ship quitting the station. There can be no doubt that none but a master-mind could have done this with the small resources available. By his untiring exertions the Cadiz and Mediterranean squadrons were enabled to hold their own and make head against an enemy which outnumbered them in the ratio of three to one. St. Vincent's labour continued till the autumn, but the fatigue of body and mind had so told on his health that he wrote to the Admiralty, "I must retire or sink!" Indeed, before arriving at Gibraltar, he had written asking to be relieved on the score of his health, and Lord Keith had been sent out to reinforce the Cadiz fleet with the intention of taking St. Vincent's place should he find it necessary to retire.

Shortly after this St. Vincent returned to Cadiz, but so worn out and ill was he that at the end of a few weeks he was obliged to go back to Gibraltar. He remained there until the spring of 1799, busily employed in erecting water-tanks to catch the heavy rain on the Rock by excavations on a large scale. Water for the fleet was such a vital necessity that the question of a constant and adequate supply had troubled him for some time. For instance, when the fleet retired from Corsica to Lisbon, it had been seriously delayed by want of water. The carrying out of his scheme involved much correspondence with the Admiralty, Horse Guards, and Ordnance Departments. Probably no one but St. Vincent could have carried out this great work in the face of so many difficulties and drawbacks; but, when once completed, it won universal admiration. St. Vincent himself used to prophesy, "I hope these tanks may not be wanted, but yet the time may come when by enabling the fleet to remain at this anchorage, perhaps the very retention of this fortress, may be owing to this measure."

Before quitting this stage in St. Vincent's career which ended with his departure from Gibraltar, it will not be out of place to mention a few instances, first, of the strictness of his discipline, and, secondly, of his generosity and humour.

An officer with the rank of acting lieutenant having disgraced himself whilst rowing guard

on August 28th, 1797, by boarding two Spanish fishing-boats with drawn cutlasses, wounding one of the fishermen, and robbing the boats of their wine, in breach of his orders, and in *violation of all rules of discipline and humanity*, the Commander-in-Chief reduced him from his rank and represented to the Admiralty that he was totally unfit for further employment. An order to that effect was read out to all the ships' companies on the station. Forceful and energetic in character, impatient of dullness and unseamanlike behaviour, or of any opposition to his will, St. Vincent was profuse in his reward of merit and lavishly generous with his purse, but no less severe in his punishments. He was probably better fitted to deal with the service as it then was, and with the times in which he lived, than any other man of his day.

One night two of his officers in charge of boats were cruising in the bay of Cadiz, and one of them, coming across a privateer, examined the commission, and, finding all as it should be, left her. Not long afterwards the other officer fell in with her, and, pretending that she was a Spanish privateer, demanded wine and porter for himself and crew, of which they made very free use, and, after much overbearing conduct, the officer robbed the cabins of several valuable articles, which he secreted in his hammock on returning to his ship. The court-martial pronounced a very severe punishment on this midshipman: his

uniform was to be publicly stripped from his back, and he was to be declared incapable of ever again serving as an officer, or petty officer, in his Majesty's Navy. St. Vincent added to this sentence that his head was to be shaved and a placard affixed to his back expressive of his disgraceful conduct.

This case happened at a time when the ships lately arrived from England were in a mutinous condition and when it was most necessary to be severe; but, as his secretary used to say of him, "His austerity frowned but at intervals; his generosity was ever at hand."

On one occasion, whilst the ship was at sea on a very hot day, the pipe went, "Hands to bathe!" A sail was lowered into the water for those who could not swim; whilst those that could amused themselves by diving into the sea from various parts of the vessel. As soon as the pipe had recalled all the men on board, St. Vincent espied a knot of men on the forecastle. He stole forward, and, mixing among them, discovered that something was wrong. He sent for his secretary and said, "Go forward and find out what is the matter, for there's my delight, Roger Odell, in tears!" The secretary went forward, and found that Odell had dived into the water from the foreyard-arm, with his clothes on, quite forgetting that all the money he possessed in the world was in his trousers pocket, in bank-notes. He now found that these were reduced

to a pulp, and was in despair, for the amount was considerable.

"What can we do for Roger?" asked St. Vincent; "Can we give him a warrant?"[1] On referring to the captain it was found that this was impracticable, the man was such a child when liquor was about.

"Well, we must do something for him," said the chief, and he requested the captain to turn the hands up. When they were all on deck he called for Odell, and, as soon as that splendid seaman stood forward, St. Vincent assumed a look of displeasure, and thus addressed him: "Roger Odell, you are convicted, sir, by your own appearance, of tarnishing the British oak with tears. What have you to say in your defence, and why you should not receive what you deserve?" Roger, to whom the finding himself in a scrape was an accumulation of calamity quite overwhelming, pleaded that he had lost all he had in the world; that he knew it was his own fault; but that, having been a good many years saving it, he could not help crying a little. However, if his lordship would forgive him this once, he should never see him cry again; and he ended this piteous discourse by appealing to the captain and first lieutenant for a character.

St. Vincent, still with the countenance of displeasure, replied, "The loss of money, sir,

[1] That is, promote him to the rank of warrant officer.

can never be an excuse for a British seaman in tears; *there could be but one, which will never happen to you, Roger Odell*—disgrace." There was a pause of breathless silence when St. Vincent, appearing to soften, added: "Roger Odell, you are one of the best men in the ship. You are, moreover, the captain of a top, and in my life I never saw a man behave himself better in battle than you did in the *Victory* during the action with the Spanish fleet. To show, therefore, that your Commander-in-Chief will never pass over merit, wheresoever he may find it—there is your money, sir"—giving him £70—"but no more tears, mind, no more tears!"

The boatswain's mate then piped down. Roger remained where he was for an instant, then, realising that he actually was to retain this money, he exclaimed, "Thank ye! my lord! thank ye!" and took a header into the crowd of men swarming below, to conceal an exhibition of feeling which he was again unable to suppress.

I doubt if any reader can appreciate the foregoing scene who has not himself experienced the admiration that an officer frequently feels for the best type of petty officer. In the days of St. Vincent a man did not become captain of a top unless he had proved himself, by character, courage, and devotion to duty, a born leader of men. His duties required him to be instantly ready for action when called upon, day or night, fair weather or foul, and the call

was never made in vain. Undoubtedly there were men in those days of sailing-ships whose superiors may be sought for in vain.

There is one other story of Cadiz worth recounting. St. Vincent had been frequently impressed by the zeal and ability with which the commander of a certain brig maintained his position in-shore under every condition of weather. From unavoidable circumstances, his ship had been kept on this service longer than usual, instead of going into port. Her provisions and stores had often been replenished by the fleet, but her commander always seemed cheerful, and never complained of any difficulty. St. Vincent knew something of his private history and admired him immensely for it, for with very slender means, and at great personal sacrifice, he respectably supported a wife and a numerous family.

When a relief at length arrived, the brig stood in need of extensive repairs. The admiral sent for his secretary and told him to bring him £100; he was also instructed to make out orders for the brig to be repaired at Gibraltar, and afterwards to proceed on a cruise to the Levant; "For," said the admiral, "if I send him to England now, his vessel will be paid off, and he has no money to buy a gown for his wife or for his daughters." The Commander-in-Chief then asked him to dinner, gave him the seat on his right, and showed him every attention. After

dinner he sent for him and said, "You had, sir, a long and severe duty, but I trust it will not prove an unprofitable one in the result, for I have not failed to notice the officer-like, manly way in which you have performed it. I have desired the commissioner at Gibraltar to give your brig a complete refit, and when that has been done these orders will carry you to the best position for picking up prizes. At Gibraltar you will fill up with as much provisions as you can stow, and you will cruise as long as they last, and, mind, I expect you will fill up your own stores with everything you can want."

The commander expressed his gratitude, but was not ashamed to confess that he could not, consistently with his duty to his family, carry out the admiral's instructions with regard to his own stores, and consequently begged to be allowed to go on half-pay, as that must be his fate eventually.

St. Vincent replied: "You know, sir, I always like to be obeyed without difficulty. Your orders, which are in this parcel, will, I hope, not be found to prejudice your family—let me not hear a word in reply or any more thanks from you. Go and prosper."

The parcel contained the sum of £100 already referred to.

St. Vincent, who was a most accomplished and well-read man, with a library of his own,

which he carried about with him, employed his spare moments in reading. He was anxious that the younger officers in the garrison should also spend part of their time in reading—for which they would have plenty of opportunities at Gibraltar. He therefore prevailed on the governor to get up a fund for the purpose, to which he subscribed largely himself, and he also persuaded the Admiralty to encourage the project; nor did he lose sight of it, until a room had been built and filled with books, and few officers can have passed through Gibraltar without feeling grateful for the splendid "Garrison Library" which he founded. About this time, —when Lord Keith took command of the forces blockading Cadiz in consequence of St. Vincent's illness, Spain had grown very tired of the war with England—a struggle which it is very doubtful if she ever wished for. Bonaparte, however, became more insistent, and suggested that, if Spain could not help in ships, she might do so with money, naming a very large sum, which Spain was to obtain from her American possessions, if it could be smuggled past the British cruisers.

A spy, named Ygea, was authorised to propose to St. Vincent that he should provide a frigate to escort this sum to Spain, and thus enable her to pacify Napoleon, and escape from the necessity of further hostilities. It is idle to speculate how this proposal would have been entertained

by the Home Government to whom St. Vincent forwarded it; but it came too late, for on May 6th the news reached St. Vincent, then confined to his bed by illness, that a powerful French fleet of twenty-six sail of the line and a number of frigates was passing into the Mediterranean.

It was the Brest fleet, which, having contrived to elude our forces off that port, appeared first off Cadiz in the hope that they might prevail on their allies to join them; but had been obliged to retire before Lord Keith's squadron, which had threatened battle, and they were now proceeding to Cartagena to secure the assistance of the Spanish ships in that port. The importance of this new event was enormous. The question at once arose, How was St. Vincent to inform the Governments of England and of Portugal; how warn Lord Nelson, and Sir John Duckworth off Minorca, of the approach of this powerful fleet; and how assemble all his own ships and pursue them?

The *Speedy* (Captain Brenton) was ordered to Lisbon, and the *Vesuvius* to Minorca, while St. Vincent sent orders to Nelson to concentrate his forces near Sicily. He then determined to get Lord Keith, with all his forces, to sail at once to the support of Duckworth at Minorca, thus forming two squadrons—one of twenty ships off Minorca, and the other of fifteen off Sicily. Some speedier means of reaching Lord Keith off Cadiz and of informing the Portuguese

authorities at Lisbon had to be found. Jackson, the master of the *Ville de Paris*, and now attached to the Earl's staff, volunteered to go to Cadiz in an open boat, and at the same time a Spaniard was despatched to Lisbon. The following cypher message, "*Brest Fleet gone up, St. V., 6th May,*" was written on a piece of parchment and coiled away inside a sugar-loaf button on the man's coat. Just as he started a violent storm of wind and rain came on, which helped him to get through the Spanish lines. He was challenged once, but bribed the sentry to let him pass. In Spain he was twice stopped and searched on suspicion, every seam of his clothes being ripped open. Luckily, the button escaped notice, and he eventually arrived at Lisbon with his message, and brought to the minister the first news of the Brest fleet being out.

St. Vincent, while dictating from his bed all the orders for the station, was astonished by the sudden reappearance of Mr. Jackson drenched to the skin. The same storm that had helped the Spaniard to pass the lines had prevented him making any headway, and he had only just managed to get back.

St. Vincent at once cried out, "Then nothing remains but to rummage the Rock and try how much gold is wanting to raise up the man who will brave a sentry's bullet, and maybe a spy's halter." As the secretary was about to start off in search of a messenger, Sir Isaac Coffin

exclaimed, "Stay! I will go." "*You* will go?" "Yes, on plea of proceeding on my appointment to Halifax the Governor of San Roque will give me a passport to Lisbon; but, once in Spain, I shall travel as a merchant of the country, and, if I can't send off to Lord Keith from Cadiz, I certainly shall be able to do so from Faro. So cypher the despatches while I go and dress. *You see, this thing must be done!*" Although the risk involved was considerable, Sir Isaac's courage and address, and his perfect mastery of the Spanish language, were not to be rejected —and he left the room in the highest spirits, singing a *bolero*, and infecting everybody with his light-heartedness. "Good-bye, Coffin!" said St. Vincent laughingly, "you'll be hanged to-morrow." Happily, this prophecy was not fulfilled, for Sir Isaac got through quite safely, and by daybreak of the earliest morning on which it was possible for Lord Keith to appear, his fleet was reported as rounding into the harbour. On their arrival Tucker remarked that Sir Isaac had not been hanged after all. "That's by no means certain yet," replied the chief, laughing; "though, to tell the truth, I never imagined any Spaniard of our day would prove a match for an American like Sir Isaac— an Indian hunter, every inch of him. But now, Tucker, tell Mr. Jackson to hurry on the watering of the fleet, and that we'll all sail as soon as possible."

In spite of his illness, the old admiral superintended all the preparations in person, and, surprising as it may seem, the entire fleet was watered, provisioned, stored, and ready for sea in two days.

The *Ville de Paris* was ready first, and hoisted the Commander-in-Chief's flag as soon as the fleet was clear of the harbour, and by nightfall every ship was at sea. A busier day's work can rarely have been witnessed. St. Vincent supposed that the object of the French was to make a descent on Port Mahon, in Minorca, with the help of the ships from Cartagena, and to overpower Sir John Duckworth's small squadron there. He therefore proceeded with his whole fleet to Port Mahon to protect them. As it happened, the French had only intended to collect what forces they could, and to appear in the Channel. But nature sets a limit to what even the strongest of us can do, and St. Vincent's recent exertions proved too much for his shattered constitution. He could no longer carry on his duty, and was obliged to transfer the command of the fleet to Lord Keith, whilst he himself repaired to Port Mahon to recruit. Here he received two letters from Nelson, the first dated June 10th, from Palermo:

"My dear Lord,

"We have reports that you were thinking of going home. This distresses us most exceedingly, and myself in particular; so much so that

I have serious thoughts of going myself, if such an event happens; but, for *the sake of our country*, do not quit us at this serious moment. I wish not to detract from the merit of whom may be your successor, but it must take a length of time to be in any manner a St. Vincent. We look up to you, as we have always found you, our father, under whose fostering care we are led to fame. If I have, my dear lord, any right in your friendship, let me entreat you to rouse the sleeping lion; give not up one particle of your authority to any one. *Be again our St. Vincent, and we shall be happy,* and amongst the most happy will be your attached and truly affectionate friend!"

On June 16th he writes:

"What have we suffered in hearing of your illness and of your return to Mahon! Let me entreat you to come to us with a force fit to fight; we will search the French out, and, if either at Leghorn or Naples, we will have them. We shall have so much happiness in fighting under the eye *of our great and good Earl.* If you are sick, I will fag for you, and our dear Lady Hamilton will nurse you with the most affectionate attention, and good Sir William will make you laugh with his wit and inexhaustible pleasantry. We all love you; come to your sincere friends, let us get you well. It will be such happiness to us all, and, amongst the foremost, to your attached, faithful, and affectionate

"NELSON."

But it was not to be. St. Vincent found that even the repose of Mahon failed to relieve him

of his illness, and he regretfully resolved to return to Gibraltar in the *Argo*. On his arrival there he saw the combined fleets of France and Spain passing the Rock and standing to the westward. A few days afterwards Lord Keith passed in pursuit, and then St. Vincent sailed for England in the *Argo*. He was accompanied by his staff, Captain Grey, his flag-lieutenant and secretary, and also by Dr. Baird, who had been appointed to the *Ville de Paris* in January, 1797, and who ever afterwards was a constant correspondent of the Earl's on the subject of the health of the ships.

Thus ends this most strenuous time of the great chief's command in the Mediterranean in person. In August 1799 his flag was struck at Spithead and he went home to rest and recuperate.

CHAPTER XI

THE CHANNEL FLEET

1799—1801

WHEN Lord St. Vincent arrived in England he went straight to his house at Rochetts, in Essex, and was confined to it for some time by the illness which had compelled him to retire. As soon as he was reported to be recovering he received a challenge from Sir John Orde, who, it may be remembered, had considered himself affronted by St. Vincent's treatment of him before Cadiz, and had been following him about to get personal satisfaction. Now St. Vincent was at this time over sixty-five years of age, and, after all his hard work in the service, may be said to have fairly earned a rest. Moreover, if a Commander-in-Chief were obliged to accept the challenge of every officer who felt himself aggrieved there would be an end to all discipline. Sir John Orde was a much younger man, and, though he may have had a real grievance against St. Vincent, the latter, though perfectly ready to accept any challenge which honour required of him, did not deem it an obligation on him in

this case. He saw no reason why he should rènder satisfaction for having, as he believed, done his duty, for it must be remembered that, in view of the disaffection which prevailed in the fleet before Cadiz, he absolutely denied having treated Sir John in an uncalled-for manner. Lord Spencer, who knew the history of the whole transaction, having heard of this challenge, probably from Colonel Barré (on whom Sir John had called to ask for St. Vincent's address) informed the King of what was in the wind, and His Majesty sent prompt orders to St. Vincent not to accept the challenge—a command which St. Vincent had no choice but to obey.

At this time the Government were contemplating a powerful expedition against Brest, with the object of destroying the Arsenal and burning the ships in that port, so as more effectively to prevent the threatening expeditions which were being constantly fitted out there. They proposed to embark the army intended to form part of this expedition in the Channel fleet. The Government first consulted Lord Bridport, who was in command of the fleet, but as he had given out that he intended to retire altogether from active service, they took counsel with Sir Edward Pellew and Sir John Warren. General Sir Charles Grey was selected to command the troops, and, being asked to state the number of men he required, suggested 70,000 men in three divisions, one of which was to make a feint

on other parts of the coast, while the other two were to attack Brest in the spring of 1800. One of these divisions was to land in Camoret Bay, and the other in Douarnenez Bay.

It was found, however, that the state of the Channel Fleet was anything but satisfactory. A spirit of mutiny and sedition still prevailed there, and seemed likely to break out again at any moment. It was a critical time, and the Government realised the necessity for placing the fleet under the command of the leader most competent to deal with it. For this purpose they could find none better fitted than St. Vincent. He had already proved himself to be the one man who could restore discipline and could be relied upon to work on terms of friendly co-operation with the Army, especially since Sir Charles Grey, with whom he had worked so successfully in the West Indies, was to be in command.

Unfortunately, St. Vincent was still far from well, and the Secretary of the Admiralty, Mr. Nepean, was instructed to inquire of Dr. Baird, his medical attendant, as to when it was likely that his health would be sufficiently restored to allow him to take the command of the Channel Fleet, adding that his services were most urgently required. Dr. Baird could only reply that his patient was suffering from dropsy, and that the issue was doubtful. Happily, a spell of milder weather brought about a marked improvement, and one day Lord St. Vincent, who was then at

Bath, surprised Dr. Baird by remarking, "Baird, I am going afloat!" "Surely, my lord, you are not," replied the doctor. "Stop, Baird! I anticipate all you are going to say, but the King and the Government require it, and the discipline of the British Navy demands it. It is of no consequence to me whether I die afloat or on shore. The die is cast!"

This last was a common expression of his when his mind was made up for a strong measure. He went on to explain that Lord Spencer had visited him, and that everything was settled. He then sent for his secretary, and a few days later found him at Portsmouth with his flag hoisted in the *Namur* and Captain Sir George Grey, Dr. Baird, and Sir Thomas Troubridge (as Captain of the Fleet) on his staff. The *Namur* sailed in due course and picked up the fleet off Ushant, where St. Vincent shifted his flag to his old ship, the *Ville de Paris*, and succeeded Lord Bridport. At this time the Channel Fleet consisted of the following forty ships of the line, in addition to a number of frigates:

	Guns.	
Barfleur	98	Rear-Admiral C. Collingwood. Capt. Stephens.
Superb	74	Capt. Sutton.
Excellent	74	Capt. Hon. R. Stopford.
Atlas	74	Capt. Jones.
Achille	74	Capt. Murray.
Neptune	98	Capt. Vashon.
Royal Sovereign	100	Admiral Sir Allan Gardner, Bart. Capt. Bedford.

	Guns.	
Cæsar	80	Capt. Sir J. Saumarez.
Centaur	74	Capt. Markham.
Saturn	74	Capt. Totty.
St. George	90	Capt. Edwards.
Elephant	74	Capt. Foley.
Edgar	74	Capt. Buller.
Impetueux	78	Capt. Sir Ed. Pellew.
Temeraire	98	Rear-Admiral Sir J. H. Whitshed. Capt. Marsh.
Ajax	74	Capt. Hon. A. F. Cochrane.
Resolution	74	Capt. Gardner.
Defence	74	Capt. Lord N. Paulet.
Robust	74	Capt. Countess.
Namur	74	Capt. Luke.
Ville de Paris	110	Admiral the Earl St. Vincent. Capt. Sir George Grey.
Royal George	100	Capt. Domett.
Captain	74	Capt. Sir R. Strachan.
Ramillies	74	Capt. Grindall.
Bellona	74	Capt. Sir G. B. Thompson.
Marlborough	74	Capt. Sotheby.
Terrible	74	Capt. Wolseley.
Mars	74	Rear-Admiral Hon. G. Berkeley. Capt. Monkton.
Glory	98	Capt. Wells.
Hector	74	Capt. Elphinston.
Magnificent	74	Capt. Bowater.
Canada	74	Capt. Hon. M. De Courcey.
Windsor Castle	74	Rear-Admiral Sir C. Cotton. Capt. Bertie.
Prince	90	Capt. S. Sutton.
Triumph	74	Capt. Harvey.
Defiance	74	Capt. Shivers.
London	98	Capt. Purvis.
Venerable	74	Capt. Sir W. G. Fairfax.
Warrior	74	Capt. Tyler.
Cumberland	74	Capt. Graves.

The command of this fleet, as St. Vincent speedily discovered, was no easy task. As soon as the salute had been fired, and the admirals and captains had come on board, it was openly

announced that the senior admiral considered that he was entitled to command, after Lord Bridport, who had left, as he had been always in the Channel Fleet. St. Vincent referred the matter to Lord Spencer; but, having overlooked insubordination in the case of an officer in high command, he determined to show equal leniency to the lowest, and when the case of a man named Riley, who had been sentenced to be flogged for desertion, came before him, St. Vincent remitted the sentence of the court-martial, this being his first official act. The state of the discipline in the Channel Fleet at this time may be gathered from the fact that scarcely a single one of the petty officers coming on board thought of touching his cap to the quarter-deck. St. Vincent was warned by the Admiralty that he must be on his most vigilant guard, since letters had been intercepted showing that a correspondence was going on between the seamen with a view to another general mutiny, to dispossess the officers of their command.

St. Vincent had been prepared for jealousy in the Channel, but when he learned that before he arrived the toast had been drunk by one of the captains at Lord Bridport's table, "May the discipline of the Mediterranean never be introduced into the Channel Fleet," and that this toast had passed without rebuke, the admiral naturally felt that it was useless for him to look for the support that he had every right to expect.

He was not disheartened, though greatly disappointed, for, with a new lot of officers who were unaccustomed to his methods, he realised that he would have to begin all over again those stringent measures which were essential for the restoration of discipline and which must precede, and furnish the ground-work for, a milder régime. The fear of unpopularity was not going to deter him from doing what the Government and his country had required him to do. With the utmost composure he told his secretary to bring him the Mediterranean order-book, and then and there he issued *every* order tending to enforce discipline and promote the general good management of the ships, establishing every regulation, imposing every restriction, which he had already found by experience to be productive of good effects. At the same time he addressed a firm but courteous letter to all the admirals and captains requesting their co-operation. In this letter he made it perfectly clear that the discipline of the Mediterranean was to be introduced into the Channel, and from that moment onwards it was rigidly enforced.

Sir Nisbet Willoughby, who served in the fleet, afterwards declared that "This strictness had the effect, perhaps, of saving old England."

We will now turn our attention to the naval forces in Brest. It will be remembered that when Admiral Bruix escaped Lord Keith, and

was followed by him out of the Mediterranean, he got into Cadiz. From this point he sailed on July 21st, 1799, dragging in his wake a reluctant Spanish squadron, which he had forced to accompany him, the Spaniards being still under the thumb of the Directory. The French sailed badly, and the Spaniards still worse; and Bruix and his colleague, Mazzaredo, had only just anchored in the roadstead of Brest when Keith sailed past them on his way to England. About a month later Bonaparte escaped from Egypt, landed in Europe on October 9th, overthrew the Directory, and assumed despotic power as First Consul. From thenceforward all the movements of the Brest fleet were controlled by him. There were in the harbour of Brest, in 1800, forty-eight French and Spanish ships of the line. Their position was such that, if they did not come out and fight, they ran a risk of being reduced to impotence by the cutting off of their supplies, and, according to the French accounts, this actually did take place. At this time the trade of France was a coasting trade, preyed upon by our small cruisers. Our trade, on the other hand, was world-wide. Our merchantmen sailed to and from the most distant parts under the convoy of warships of considerable force, well able to keep off the French privateers who hovered round the entrance to the Channel. St. Vincent's regulations for the blockade of Brest differed from those adopted by his imme-

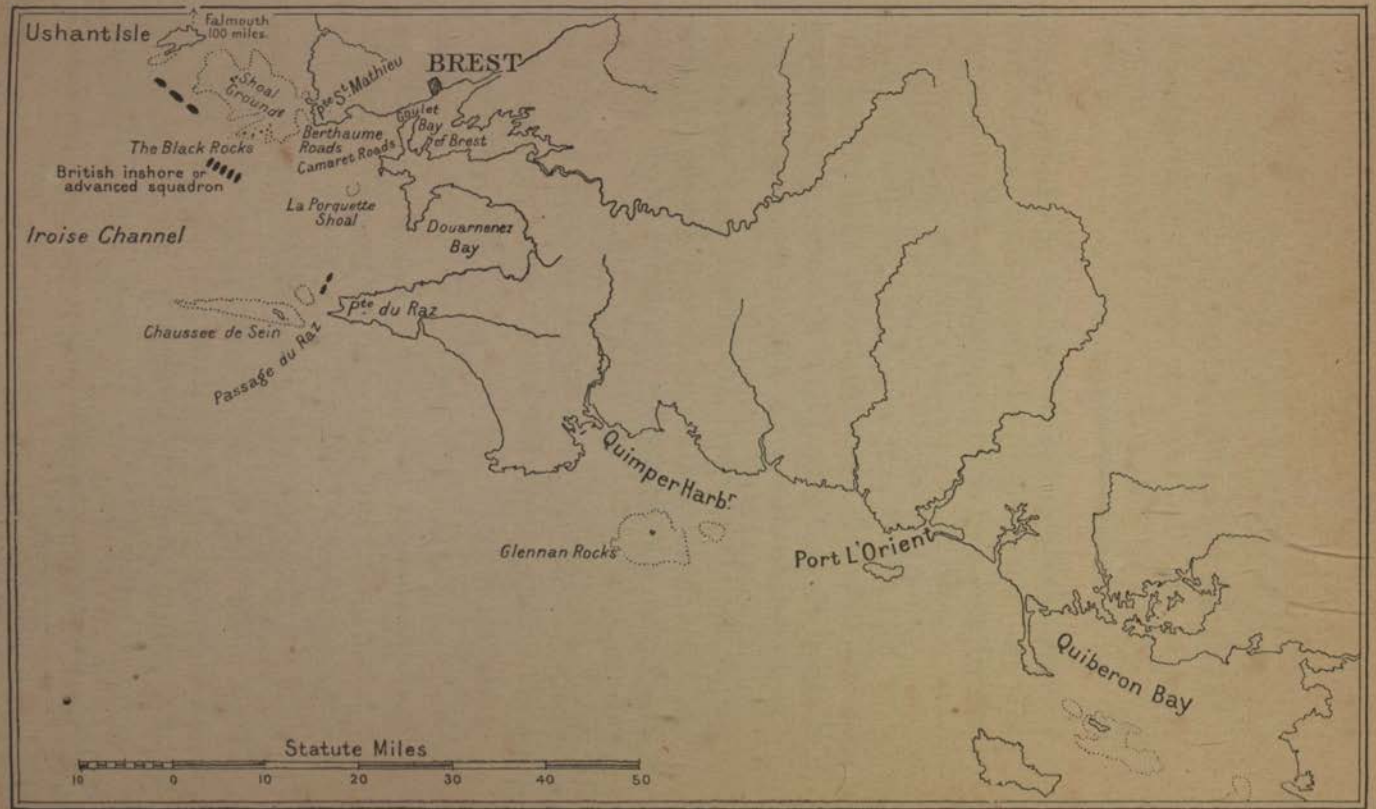
diate predecessors, who had been accustomed to return to England in the winter months.

The rendezvous he ordered was "Well in with Ushant with an easterly wind," while the in-shore squadron was disposed as follows:—

"A squadron consisting of five ships of the line always anchors between the Black rocks and Porquette, in the Bay of Brest. A squadron of frigates and cutters cruise between the advanced post and the Goulet, and a small squadron of three sail of the line cruise between Ushant and the Black rocks, to support the five sail of the line anchored there. A ship of the line and a frigate guard the Passage du Raz and the Penmark Rocks, within which lies the harbour of Quimper, only thirteen miles from Brest, into which the enemy endeavours to throw supplies from Vannes and other ports of the Morbihan. Frigates are stationed all along the coast of the Bay of Biscay, from Isle Dieu to Cape Finisterre."

The advice he left to his second in command was:

"I recommend you in the strongest terms *never* to be farther than six or eight leagues from Ushant, with the wind easterly; and, if westerly, make the Saintes as often as the weather will permit, and when the wind is in such a point as to enable the French ships to slip out of the Port of Brest stand in on the first of the flood, so far as to see the in-shore squadron, unless it should be a fog; otherwise, the ships appointed to that important service may not feel that confidence, so necessary, to keep them in their post, a failure which has frequently happened



PLAN OF BREST

before I was invested with this command. I never was on a station so readily, and with such little risk to be maintained, as that off Ushant with an easterly wind, owing to the length and strength of the flood-tide."

His orders to the ships were to make demands in time to the agent victualler in Plymouth for water and provisions, also that the ships told off for supplies were to go to Plymouth, 120 miles off, and not, as had been done before, to Portsmouth, which was 250 miles off, since it was of the utmost importance that they should be able to get back quickly, and this they could not do from Portsmouth with a westerly wind.

In order to carry out this blockade in the manner prescribed it was necessary that the vessels which had to cruise, or stand off and on shore, should tack or wear at least once in the night, and, as St. Vincent's orders were that all captains were to be on deck during such evolutions, this fact did not add to his popularity in the fleet. However, by the adoption of this method an efficient blockade was maintained. Plans had now to be made for the attack on Brest, and when St. Vincent came to discuss the matter with Sir Charles Grey they discovered that there was no trustworthy map of the approaches, whereupon St. Vincent exclaimed to his secretary, "Ah, Tucker, had Captain Jervis surveyed Brest in 1774, in 1800 Lord St. Vincent would not have been without

information." Both Grey and St. Vincent had stipulated that the utmost secrecy should be observed about the expedition, but it was discovered that the Government had sent an officer to Jersey to collect information from a French *émigré*, and thus the whole matter was bruited abroad, and when the fleet stood in for the landing-place the French were already busy throwing up earthworks. Bonaparte had received accurate information of the attack, and was fully prepared, so that the expedition had to be abandoned.

Scarcely had the fleet taken up its stations again for the blockade than there arose a tremendous hurricane, the like of which even the oldest seaman could scarcely remember, and the whole fleet, with every vessel in it, was blown out to sea. The gale began on the morning of May 17th, when two of the line-of-battle ships were seen to have lost their maintop-masts. At 11 a.m. the *Ville de Paris* carried hers away. At noon such was the violence of the gale that St. Vincent signalled to the fleet to make whatever port they could fetch, without regard to order of sailing.

The *Ville de Paris*, having weathered Ushant, pitched and rolled to such an extent that she was in some danger. One heavy sea broke in the stern windows, and cleared the admiral's cabin. At that time the Commander-in-Chief was on the quarter-deck, sitting in the bight of

the maintopsail, in which a seat had been made for him. Two quartermasters were at hand to assist his aged frame, and from there he gave his orders to the fleet. One sea washed over them, and St. Vincent said to one of the quartermasters, who was trying to dodge the seas, "Stand still, and do as I do; it will run off you."

The *Ville de Paris* made Torbay on the morning of May 18th, and the rest of the fleet reached either Torbay, Plymouth, or Spithead, with the exception of two sloops, which foundered.

Great was now the delight of the cavillers who had maintained that a blockade of Brest was impracticable in bad weather, however possible it may have been at Toulon or Cadiz. But their satisfaction was short-lived, and merely served to show their ignorance of the man whose flag now flew over them.

Having once made up his mind that a certain course was desirable it was characteristic of St. Vincent to rely on his own judgment, and persevere in it at all costs. The order was given to refit and fill up with water as soon as possible, and it was intimated that the Commander-in-Chief would take up his position again without any deviation from previous orders. One regulation which he made in reference to the watering was extremely unpopular. He insisted that a captain of a battle-ship with the captain and subaltern of marines and a detachment of marines was to attend on shore at the

watering-place, day and night, and to be relieved every twenty-four hours in rotation. No petty officer or man was to be allowed to quit his boat under any pretence.

There was also an order that a boat in charge of a lieutenant was to go on shore each day and bring off any officer or man who had leave, the officer in charge having strict orders to leave the shore at sunset, after which hour no boat was to be permitted to go on shore, on any pretence whatever, without special leave from the captain.

The captains were indignant at the order to mount guard for twenty-four hours at the watering-place, and were even upon the point of making a representation to the chief on the subject, when, having heard of it, he told one of them that he could not imagine why a rule of this kind had ever been relaxed, since, when he was captain of the *Foudroyant*, he had always taken his turn with the other captains in such service, and, think or do or say what they might, so long as he was Commander-in-Chief the order should stand, and he would see that the captains performed their duty.

St. Vincent having heard that one captain had gone on board the *Ramillies* to persuade Captain Grindall to join him in making a remonstrance, he instructed Sir Thomas Troubridge to admonish him for this dangerous proceeding, bordering on an incitement to sedition, and to

apprise him "that the Commander-in-Chief cannot in future overlook behaviour so highly incompatible with true discipline and subordination."

The order which caused most dissatisfaction was that which forbade boats leaving the ship for the shore after sunset; but the Commander-in-Chief felt that this was most necessary in the interests of the men, who, landed on an open beach in all weathers, and obliged to wait for their officers till all hours of the night, could not resist the temptation of the nearest public-house, and, once there, if they had no money in their pockets, would give the clothes off their backs in exchange for a drink. He knew that many a good man had been ruined and lost to the service, solely owing to this, for it often happened that the man was in the grog-shop when the officer would run down in a great hurry at being so late, and shove off, regardless of who was absent. Then the man, for fear of the punishment he would receive for leaving his boat, would not return the next morning, but attempt to desert, and either got clear away, or the police would arrest him, and he would be brought off and flogged. Being fully aware of this common case, St. Vincent determined to put a stop to it by the order in question. He knew quite well that it would draw down upon him much odium and unpopularity, but was none the less determined to persevere. The order was

fully justified by its results, for from February 1800 to January 1801, whilst he was Commander-in-Chief, there were only two courts-martial for desertion, and in one case the punishment was remitted by the Admiralty, and in the other by the Commander-in-Chief himself, as a compliment to the fleet on the rarity of the offence.

The fleet, having been refitted, resumed its station off Brest, and it now remained to be seen whether St. Vincent had planned a blockade which it was beyond its power to maintain. As a matter of fact, the fleet carried on the blockade in every detail as the chief had planned it, and for 121 days held the port of Brest closely sealed, and, with the exception of one day of dense fog, the main body kept up communication with the in-shore squadron. This service was monotonous and wearisome in the extreme, and must have been very irksome to the active minds on board ship, but it is just such unobtrusive services as these, with no laurels or honour to reward them, which make up the greater part of a seaman's life in the Navy. The first concern of the Admiralty should be the training of officers to command in the Navy ; and the best way to train them is to give them practice at sea. This practice the officers before Brest were now getting, and St. Vincent was proving the truth of Napoleon's saying to his brother Joseph in Spain, "Men are nothing; a man is everything." A first-rate admiral is worth a

whole squadron, provided he has under him well-disciplined ships, commanded by officers who know their men, and how to get the best out of them, and who have confidence in one another and in their chief. Indeed, I would go so far as to say that "ships are nothing; men are everything"; for the ships that win battles are those that have been long enough in commission to allow captains and officers to know one another and to understand fully the capabilities of the vessels they command. It has been proved over and over again in history, that, to commission a ship and forthwith send her out to fight is to court disaster, whereas the ship that has been some time in commission has *confidence on her side.*

All the time that the blockade lasted Dr. Baird had been untiring in his advice as to the health of the fleet, working constantly and successfully with his chief. Dr. Baird was merely the surgeon of the flagship, chosen for this post by St. Vincent with his wonted unerring judgment of men; but he performed all the duties of physician to the fleet, since Dr. Trotter, the officer who actually held that appointment, resided at Plymouth. Owing to a plentiful provision of fruit and vegetables, and especially of onions, and a constant supply of lemon and lime-juice, there were no cases of scurvy, but other ailments incidental to a confined life and insanitary conditions gave trouble to the authorities.

The ships of that day were badly ventilated, their decks were damp, and washed with dirty water—a custom which still survives.

Moreover, the supply of fresh meat was not constant, as it had been in other ports, and it is said that, during the whole of the blockade, the ships had not one fresh meal. Illness began to appear, and at first caused some anxiety. Dr. Baird recommended that a properly appointed sick-bay or hospital should be fitted up on board each ship, that the ventilation should be improved, and the decks dry-scrubbed with stone and sand that had been previously heated in the ovens, instead of washing them down with dirty water and leaving them reeking with damp as heretofore. He also advocated the proper airing of beds and bedding, whenever the weather was suitable. St. Vincent gave him hearty support in all these reforms, and ordered the necessary regulations to be duly carried out and entered in the log, refusing to allow any neglect of even the smallest detail where the health of men was concerned.

The result of these precautions was seen when the fleet returned to Torbay in November. The Medical Board, anticipating that in a fleet of 28,000 men the hospital cases would be very numerous, and that Dartmouth would be unable to accommodate all the sick, had rented barns and houses for them. To their astonishment, however, there were only sixteen cases which

required hospital treatment. This was mainly due to the medical skill and foresight of Dr. Baird, supported by the discipline and authority of the chief, and the greatest credit is due to them. Just then England needed every man she possessed, for it was known that there was at that time in Brest a large number of troops embarked, and ready for sailing, to make a descent in Ireland, where the Insurrection Act was in force, the use of arms prohibited, and martial law proclaimed. Three times had the French fleet tried to get out, and three times had it been stopped by the blockading force, which could not have continued there but for the good health of the crews. So highly was the value of his services appreciated that the Admiralty offered Dr. Baird the pay of physician to the fleet. This he gracefully declined. He had had great difficulty with the Medical Board, who had not always supported him as they should have done, and St. Vincent felt compelled to write to the Admiralty :

" I have given Mr. Baird no appointment, nor shall I. But for his exertions half the ships in the squadron would have been laid up. He is the most valuable man in the Navy, not excepting the Board itself, with which he shall correspond no more."

Before the fleet retired to Torbay on account of the south-westerly gales, St. Vincent issued an

order that no officer was to go farther than three miles from the shore, so as to be able to join his ship immediately. Before this order was given a certain admiral attended a ball some distance off, and, when he returned, found that the fleet had sailed, and he was obliged to hurry after it in a frigate in order to regain his ship off Ushant. This happened at a time when the enemy were expected out at any moment. St. Vincent knew that the ship flying the admiral's flag did not contain the admiral, and hence his order. In writing to the Secretary of the Admiralty at the time he mentioned the fact and added that "it had not been unusual for half a dozen captains to be absent from their ships at sea."

Such a state of things would have been impossible in the times of Anson or Hawke, and the fact that it existed now only served to show the necessity for St. Vincent's order, unpopular though it may have been. He had also found it necessary, soon after taking command, to limit the period allowed for ships to refit owing to the unconscionable time taken by some of them. Another and a still more unpopular order was that no captains or other officers were to sleep on shore during the time of their refit. This was found necessary because some of the captains had given indiscriminate leave to their men, irrespective of their conduct, and desertion had reached such a pitch that no less

than eighty-three men deserted from one ship during a refit. In order to put a stop to desertion, some captains gave leave very sparingly, and only to the best of the men, who they knew could be trusted, a course which gave rise to much discontent. But when even the captains were not allowed to sleep on shore the men could not complain, and all desertion ceased. Meanwhile, as the families of officers of the fleet usually lived close to the ports of refit, bad feeling against the admiral ran very high amongst them. However, the officers knew the man under whom they were serving, and dared not disobey. News of this order was not long in reaching the French, and a similar rule was adopted in their fleet, the restriction being extended to the admirals also (*Victoires et Conquêtes*, 1804). St. Vincent cared nothing for the frowns and disapproval of any one, but kept his ships always ready and always efficient. On one occasion he sent his secretary to explain the matter to the wife of one of the officers, in the following terms:

"The duty of a captain of a battleship in war-time is incessant, requiring the most constant and unremitting attention, and the best first lieutenant in the world cannot be a sufficient substitute for him, in that his whole body and soul should be in it, which, with his wife and family near him, never has been, or can be; and, unless the husband and wife can make up their minds to separation *during war*, it would be unwise and unjust to the service,

and to me, for him to delay one day his intention of retiring."

On another occasion a correspondence took place between the Commander-in-Chief and a Rear-Admiral as to the depth of water on his station—the Rear-Admiral having remonstrated at being required to stand in-shore, according to his orders. To convince him that there was water and to spare, St. Vincent led the main body of the fleet considerably inside of him, and, sailing round him, stood out again. Very soon afterwards the Rear-Admiral in question was advised to go home and recruit his health.

One day in November the Rear-Admiral in Douarnenez Bay had allowed his squadron to be blown out to sea, and off his station. The Commander-in-Chief signalled to Captain Hill, and told him to take despatches into Douarnenez Bay, to the officer in command. Captain Hill exclaimed that the squadron was some distance out. "No! no!" said St. Vincent, "it is in Douarnenez Bay." Troubridge, who was standing near, said to Captain Hill, "He sees them as well as you do, but he wishes them to be there." Captain Hill was quick to take the hint, and set off with his orders, which led the Rear-Admiral back to his station, though it was blowing very hard at the time.

One of his regulations on which St. Vincent laid special stress was that captains should be on

deck day or night during an evolution, and one night, when it was blowing hard, and the fleet was "tacking in succession," the admiral was missed, and, on search being made for him, was discovered by his secretary in the stern gallery, clad in his dressing-gown and cocked hat, watching the movements of the fleet.

He knew that if he stayed on the deck of his own ship such silence would be maintained that the ship next astern, in close order, would certainly be aware of it. His secretary begged him to return to his cabin, since, in his state of health, such exposure was dangerous. "Hush, sir, Hush! I want to see how the evolution is performed in such a night of weather, and to know whether Jemmy is on deck." [1] Just then, hearing the shrill voice of the captain, he said: "Aye, that will do," and retired to his cabin.

There were several spirited actions fought about this time. Captain Campbell (afterwards Sir Patrick Campbell) cut out the *Dart*, Sir Edward Hamilton recovered the *Hermione*, and Sir Jeremiah Coghlan captured the *Cerbère*, one of the most splendid feats recorded in our annals. With reference to this last exploit St. Vincent wrote to the Admiralty:

"I did not think that the gallantry of Sir Edward Hamilton and Captain Campbell *could*

[1] Captain James Vashon of the *Neptune*. St. Vincent used to call him "the little man with the big heart."

have been rivalled, until I read the enclosed letter from Sir Edward Pellew (reporting Mr. Coghlan's success), which has filled my mind with pride and admiration."

Although St. Vincent is perhaps best known as a rigid and successful disciplinarian, who necessarily incurred a good deal of unpopularity in carrying out measures which he considered it was his duty to enforce, it must not be forgotten that there was another and more genial side to his character, which made those who served under him submit cheerfully to much that they disliked at his hands. Knowing that the feeling in Lord Bridport's flagship, the *Royal George*, was not in his favour—for ever since the days of Keppel and Palliser there had been considerable antagonism between the Channel and Mediterranean fleets—St. Vincent shifted his flag into the *Royal George*, and by his courtesy soon became very popular there. Whilst he was on board of her his attention was attracted by a boy in the secretary's office, and, on making inquiries about him, he was informed that the lad was a nephew of Captain Wilmot, who had been promoted by the Earl himself for his gallant conduct in the *Seahorse*, and was afterwards killed while gallantly leading his men in the siege of Acre.

St. Vincent called the boy to him and asked whether his situation was his own choice or whether he would prefer a more active life. The

boy showed great excitement, and replied that his desire had always been to be a midshipman, but that his friends had placed him there as he had no influence and no means.

St. Vincent immediately sent for his secretary and exclaimed, "Good Heavens, Tucker! Here is the nephew of poor David Wilmot—a common boy—and I find that his friends cannot afford to clothe him. Please send immediately into port, and equip him in every respect for the quarter-deck."

The boy was then placed as a midshipman in the *Ville de Paris*, where he found a well-stored midshipman's chest awaiting him. His whole life was afterwards devoted to a long series of creditable and gallant service, and he eventually rose to be a post-captain of great distinction.

One more instance may be given, to show how ready St. Vincent always was to assist those who needed help and had proved themselves worthy of it. It is customary, when one captain turns over his ship to another, for a survey of his stores to be held, and for the incoming officer to take them over at a valuation. Captain Hill had just been promoted by St. Vincent to the *Megæra*, and the surveying officers had valued the stores of Captain Bover (whom St. Vincent had promoted for his gallantry as a lieutenant in the *London*) at £50. Captain Hill complained to the admiral that they were

only worth £10, whereupon the chief called him to his cabin and said, "Hill, Bover says you decline taking his stores." "Yes, my lord," he answered, "I would not give £10 for them, for I certainly should have to provide a new supply." "But, poor Bover! poor Bover!" said the Earl. "Hill, you must take them from him," and, handing him a cheque for £100, he added, "Hill, your father and I were such friends that we once shared the same purse."

Hill took the cheque and Bover was paid, but St. Vincent's part in the transaction was kept secret from all save his secretary.

On one fine afternoon a cutter arrived with mails for the fleet, and shortly after St. Vincent had received his letters his bell rang violently for his secretary, who was ordered to arrange a good dinner for a party of forty or fifty. As soon as this matter was settled the signal was made for the fleet to "heave to," and all admirals and captains were invited to dine with the admiral, his explanation of this sudden hospitality being that "The cutter must return this evening; they will all wish to send to England by her, and this will enable them to do so. A dinner in good humour heals many a sore; besides, it will bring them all together, and I want to see them."

This dinner was one of the largest he ever gave, and when it was over St. Vincent made a speech to his guests. He apologised for having

invited them so abruptly, but the reason was that he had just received a letter from England which he must answer immediately, and he felt it would be a slight to them if he were to reply without having previously acquainted them all with its purport. He then read them a letter from a Mr. Thompson, of Paddington, who had established a home for the orphan children of seamen who had fallen in the service of their country. It had, up to now, been supported by voluntary contributions; but, the funds having become exhausted, he was compelled to appeal for assistance. St. Vincent then reminded them that every one of those present, without exception, owed all his honours, his rank and his fortunes, to the devoted gallantry of the brave men whose children were left destitute orphans. He thought, therefore, that it was his and their bounden duty to contribute, according to their means, to the support of those whose fathers had sacrificed their lives in gathering honours, fortunes, and comfort for their officers.

And, as he himself had most benefited by the brave fellows, his own contribution ought to be the largest, and need not, therefore, be an example which any one present must feel bound to follow, beyond their means. He then personally solicited a subscription, beginning with the junior officers and ending by a most liberal one of his own. The sum collected was

fairly large, and finally the cutter was despatched with the mails. The whole evening passed off very happily, every one left the ship in high good humour, and one admiral declared that he had seldom, if ever, in his life experienced more real pleasure than in the unanimous and enthusiastic admiration of Lord St. Vincent's deportment and conduct throughout that dinner-party.

This scene in the cabin of a three-decker filled with officers engaged in a blockade of the enemy, all full of gratitude to their men, and subscribing to the support of their orphan children, was one not to be forgotten. Nor did St. Vincent's subscription of £1,000 fail to be appreciated by every one, and the result of his dinner-party was that Mr. Thompson was enabled not only to enlarge his institution, but it attracted the attention of the Government, and thus led to the establishment of the Naval Asylum, afterwards merged into and amalgamated with Greenwich Hospital School. When the fact became known to the crews, the petty officers of the *Ville de Paris* fell in in a body, and expressed their gratitude to the admiral.

The winter gales now set in, and, the fleet having returned to Torbay, the admiral received permission to retire to Torr Abbey to recruit his health, which was much impaired; a most distressing cough, which never left him, in addition to his other ailments, rendered this step very necessary.

His host at Torr Abbey was his relation, Mr. Carey, and the house was within the prescribed limit of three miles from the landing.

Sir Henry Hervey was placed in the command of the in-shore ships at Brest, and in January 1801 was driven away to sea by a furious gale. The French admiral, Gauteaume, was compelled by Bonaparte to put to sea, but many of his ships were very nearly wrecked, and most of them totally dismasted. St. Vincent had now to retire from the Channel Fleet, and was soon to take up important duties on shore.

CHAPTER XII

FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY

1801—1802

In the year 1801 Mr. Pitt resigned, having found it impossible to carry out his promise to complete the Union of Ireland by Catholic Emancipation, which was the one thing that His Majesty George III. would not sanction, since he conceived that the granting of it would be contrary to his Coronation Oath. On July 17th he was succeeded as Premier by Mr. Addington, the Duke of Portland became Lord President, Lords Hawkesbury, Pelham, and Hobart, Secretaries of State; the Earl of Westmorland, Lord Privy Seal; Lord Eldon, Lord Chancellor; the Earl of Hardwick, Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland; Charles Yorke, Secretary for War; Dudley Ryder, Treasurer of the Navy; etc., etc. Lord St. Vincent, being offered the post of First Lord of the Admiralty, was summoned to attend His Majesty the King, and in the interview which took place St. Vincent explained that, as the outgoing Ministry had resigned on the question of Catholic Emancipation, he thought

ADMIRAL THE EARL OF ST. VINCENT, K.B.
First Lord of the Admiralty.

From a painting in the possession of Lady Parker.

it his duty to acquaint his Majesty, before accepting the post offered to him, and joining Mr. Addington's Government, that it was his decided and conscientious opinion that the Roman Catholics were entitled to be placed upon the same footing as the Protestant subjects of the King; for, having served nearly half a century with Roman Catholics, and having seen them tried in all situations, he must state that, upon his honour, he agreed with the outgoing Ministry, and was in favour of their equal treatment, but that, having thus stated his opinion, he held his life and his utmost services at His Majesty's disposal, and he was perfectly ready either to return to the fleet, to serve His Majesty on shore, or to retire into private life, as His Majesty might think proper to command.

The King replied:

"Lord St. Vincent, you have in this instance, as you have in every other, behaved like an honest and honourable man. Upon the question of Catholic Emancipation my mind is made up, from which I will *never* depart. And therefore, as it is not likely that it will be a matter agitated and discussed between us, I can see no reason why you should not take the Admiralty, where I very much wish to see you, and to place the Navy entirely in your hands."

In a debate which took place soon after, in the House of Commons, Mr. Fox, after some scathing remarks on the constitution of the Ministry, went on to say:

"Before I touch upon others, allow me to say that I do not think it would be easy, if possible, to find a man in the whole community better suited, or more capable of the high office he fills, than the distinguished person at the head of the Admiralty—I mean the Earl of St. Vincent."

Lord Brougham, writing about the statesmen of this time, stated that the new Cabinet presented to the country only second-rate genius in every department, save two, these two exceptions being the Law (Lord Eldon) and the Navy (the Earl of St. Vincent).

St. Vincent seems to have been diffident of his power to fill the post of First Lord of the Admiralty with success, for he says, February 26th, 1801, "I have known so many good and gallant admirals make a very contemptible figure at this Board." But he set to work with his usual energy, and was to be found at the Admiralty by seven o'clock every morning,[1] and there can be little doubt that his career there proved him to have been scarcely less distinguished as a statesman than he had been as a warrior. While captain in the *Foudroyant* he had, with his remarkable talent for appreciating character, marked out for advancement two boys named Tucker, one of whom was a carpenter, and the other a clerk. One of them had become his secretary while at Gibraltar and was now made secretary to the Board of

[1] Lady Malmesbury to Lady Minto.

Admiralty; the other, having worked through all the grades with credit, became Comptroller of the Navy.[1]

I am indebted for many of the stories about St. Vincent and much of the history of his life to Mr. Tucker, son of the Secretary of the Admiralty, who took down a host of details about the admiral from his father's lips, and is thus the standard authority in all that concerns his later personal life.

No one can be more ready, or better qualified to deal with the necessary reforms in the dockyards, or in the administration of the Navy, than a man who has himself suffered from evils that may have been rife during his command of the fleet. It was for this reason that Anson and Hawke were able to do so much to alter and remove abuses; but, human nature being what it is, they are sure to crop up again, in one form or another, unless things are very carefully watched, and during Sandwich's administration they had increased to an enormous extent. Lord Spencer had promised that an inquiry should be made as soon as peace was proclaimed, and the Finance Committee of the House of Commons had recommended "that many months of peace should not elapse before the reforms

[1] This title varied—sometimes it was Comptroller, and sometimes Surveyor. In George II.'s time it was Comptroller, in 1813 Mr. Tucker appears in the Navy List as Third Surveyor. Sir Baldwin Walker was at first termed Surveyor of the Navy, and afterwards Comptroller of the Navy.

to which attention had been directed in 1792 should be taken in hand."

It was universally admitted that it would have been dangerous, and indeed impossible, to introduce in time of war the sweeping reforms which were in themselves desirable. There are three things that will prevent dishonesty: fear of God, fear of public opinion, and fear of punishment on being discovered—and, with the last, must be also associated certainty of discovery. The first of these deterrents unfortunately does not exist everywhere, and, since education often makes people more intelligent without teaching them what is right, or stimulating their consciences, in many cases, only the two latter are to be depended on. Public opinion is a slow product, and requires strong forces to mould it. If peculation or dishonesty is practised by those in authority it soon leads to emulation on the part of those below them in perhaps minor matters. St. Vincent attacked all the things he considered to be wrong with the utmost force and vigour; indeed, according to Nelson, he was apt to "use a hatchet where others would use a penknife," and it was the last of the three deterrents named above that he relied on.

By a system of rigid inspection he made the discovery of fraud or maladministration practically certain, and took care that it was in all cases followed by equally certain punishment.

He was fully aware of the waste and corruption that prevailed in the Navy Office, for he had experienced it himself.

"He persuaded, indeed, it may be said he forced, his colleagues to pass the Act 43rd George III. which appointed Commissioners 'for inquiring into irregularities, frauds, and abuses in the navy departments and in the business of the prize agency.' The commissioners produced a series of reports between 1802 and 1805 which revealed much mismanagement and not a little pilfering. Another Commission sat in 1806 and reported in 1809. Their immediate effect was good, for they terrified evil-doers and aroused the temper of the country."[1]

The peace signed at Amiens, in March 1802, was only a temporary one. With Napoleon no peace of a lasting character was possible, for, in defiance of the Treaty he had signed, his troops continued to occupy Piedmont, and he decreed that an army of 300,000 men must be kept up by France, urging, as his excuse, our retention of Malta. Moreover, restrictions were imposed upon British commerce by which our manufactures were excluded from Holland, Spain, Portugal, and Italy. Prudent men might well consider that the Peace of Amiens was of too hollow a nature to warrant the introduction of such sweeping reforms as Lord St. Vincent thought necessary. In England there was a

[1] D. Hannay, *A Short History of the Royal Navy*, p. 437.

scarcity of wheat, and the price had risen from 54*s.* a quarter (the average of the preceding ten years) to 110*s.*, and soon after to 139*s.* and 180*s.* Nine years of war had well-nigh exhausted the country. Petitions for peace from the northern counties were frequent. Europe, with the exception of Portugal and Turkey, was at the feet of Napoleon. As Pitt had said, not long before St. Vincent took the reins at the Admiralty—

"The country is in a most perilous and alarming state, and every effort of the national energy is necessary to avert the danger. A conspiracy has been formed against our independence and even our existence as a great nation, of a nature unprecedented in any period of our history, and extraordinary exertions alone can enable us to prolong its power." [1]

The first object of the Government was to attack the Confederacy of the North, and a fleet had been ordered to the Baltic. The equipment of this force was St. Vincent's earliest task on taking office.

He selected, as First Sea Lord, Sir Thomas Troubridge, whom he described as "the ablest adviser and best executive officer in the British Navy, *with honour and courage bright as his sword*," and Captain Markham as Second Sea Lord, while the other members of the Board

[1] *Parliamentary History*, vol. xxxv., p. 960.

were Sir Philip Stephens, Mr. Adams, and Mr. Gartshore.

Lord Spencer had sent fourteen of the Channel fleet to the Baltic, and it was now necessary to replace these ships in the Channel. Unfortunately, it seemed that the spirit of discontent which had been so prevalent of late had infected the dockyards also, for delegates appeared in London to present the *demands* of the shipwrights. The Cabinet was aghast at the idea of a strike in all the dockyards. But to St. Vincent there was nothing new in the idea. The urgency for the ships was great, and the workers asked for an increase in wages, on account of the rise in the price of bread. St. Vincent caused inquiry to be made and it was found that the average yearly earnings of the shipwrights was £93; but, as the price of bread was undoubtedly high it was conceded that they should have, in addition to their pay, a ration, or allowance, in proportion to each man's family, which was to be continued as long as bread remained scarce. This offer was refused, the men apparently thinking that, as their services were so urgently required at the time of the country's need, it was too good an opportunity to be lost, and they therefore demanded that their pay should be doubled permanently. To such a pitch had the disaffection risen that at Plymouth, where the men were most completely organised, the military had been called

out to support the civil power, and guns had been placed in the street facing the dockyard. St. Vincent found himself in a difficult position, for the Cabinet were pressing him for the ships, while the men necessary to fit out the ships were on strike. In this position he took forcible action by informing the delegates that the Board had decided to discharge them all from the service, and that similar treatment would be meted out to any man in a dockyard who collected money in support of a combination to intimidate the authorities. The result was that all the men returned to work; there were no more complaints, and the ships were fitted out.

Having, whilst afloat, been greatly impressed by the efficiency and loyalty of the Marine Corps, Lord St. Vincent persuaded the King to consent to their being styled in future the Royal Marines, a distinction which, he felt, they richly deserved.

"In obtaining for them the distinction of royal, I but inefficiently did my duty. I never knew an appeal to them for honour, courage, or loyalty that they did not more than realise my expectations. If ever the real hour of danger should come to England, they will be found the country's sheet-anchor."

On April 2nd, 1801, Lord Nelson had attacked and defeated the Danish fleet at Copenhagen, a victory in which he was aided by many gallant

REAR-ADMIRAL SIR JAMES SAUMAREZ, K.B. (AGED 45).

290]

captains of the Mediterranean, including Captains Fremantle, Foley, and Riou.

The Confederation of the Baltic soon after collapsed on the death of the Emperor Paul of Russia, who was strangled in his own palace by a confederacy of nobles. His successor, Alexander, on June 17th, 1801, signed a convention to which Denmark and Sweden agreed, thus ending our dispute with the northern Powers.

In the meantime, Admiral Cornwallis was blockading Brest. Sir John Borlase Warren was off Toulon, Sir James Saumarez off Cadiz, Admirals Dickson and Graves off the Dutch coast, Admirals Keith and Bickerton in the Levant and Egyptian Sea, Admirals Duckworth and Seymour protecting our West India Islands, and Lord Nelson now proceeded to strike terror on the coasts of France.[1]

At the beginning of July Sir James Saumarez had under his orders the following ships:

	Guns.	
Cæsar	84	Capt. J. Brenton.
Spencer	74	Capt. Henry D'Esterre-Darby.
Venerable	74	Capt. Samuel Hood.
Superb	74	Capt. R. G. Keats.
Audacious	74	Capt. Shuldam Peard.
Thames	36	Capt. A. P. Holles.
Hannibal.	74	Capt. Ferris.

On standing through the Straits, he discovered three French line-of-battle ships and a frigate at anchor off Algecirez, and promptly attacked them. The attack was well-intentioned, but,

[1] Campbell's *Lives of the Admirals.*

the wind failing, the *Hannibal* got aground, and the remainder of the ships, having drifted near the batteries, were obliged to abandon her to the enemy, after she had made a brave defence against the batteries and gunboats. Every exertion was now made to repair damages. The French admiral, Linois, lost no time in sending a despatch to Admiral Mazzaredo at Cadiz, imploring the assistance of a squadron to convoy him and his prizes to Cadiz before the English ships could be refitted. But it was a tradition in the ships which had served under St. Vincent and were commanded by officers brought up in his school that no man was to rest until all damages received in an engagement were repaired and they were again ready for active service. De Saumarez, one of the greatest admirals we possessed at this time, was not the man to remain idle so long as there was anything to be accomplished, and the crews themselves were so enthusiastic that they had to be prevented from working night and day on the repairs.

Mazzaredo had sent Vice-Admiral Moreno from Cadiz with five sail of the line, and three frigates, to accompany the French ship, *San Antonio*, manned partly by French and partly by Spaniards, and carrying the flag of the French Admiral Dumenoir. They were followed by Captain Keats, in the *Superb*, with the *Thames* and *Paisley*, who saw them into Algecirez.

The loss of the *Hannibal* was received in England with great concern, but St. Vincent, on receiving the news, assured the Board of Admiralty: "We have lost a ship, but well do I know the man and the men who were there, and I shall not hesitate to go and pledge my life to the King that the nation has lost no honour."

Happily, this reverse was followed by a much more satisfactory action. The Rock was once again a scene of bustle and activity, and within five days the damages received in the recent severe engagement by the squadron had been repaired, and they now sought the enemy, whose force had been trebled by the addition of the six ships and three frigates from Cadiz.

The *Cæsar* hauled out from the Mole on the afternoon of July 12th, her band playing "Cheer up my lads, 'tis to glory we steer," which was answered by the military band with "Britons strike home," and sailed in company with the *Superb*, *Spencer*, *Venerable*, and *Audacious*—a squadron of five ships in all.

The Spanish force consisted of six ships, two being of 112 guns, one of 90, and three of 74, while the French had three ships and the prize *Hannibal*—which, however, never got to sea.

At about eleven o'clock that night the two Spanish three-deckers, mistaking one another for enemies, engaged, got foul of one another, caught fire, and were both blown up. A fresh gale was blowing at the time and the sea was

running high. This disaster drew forth the commiseration of the English, who knew that the Spaniards were merely the tools and victims of the French. On the morning of the 13th an accident also happened to the *Venerable*, which struck on a shoal in the middle of an action with the French ship *Formidable*, and lost her foremost and mizzen-mast; but Captain Hood, seated on a gun, coolly waited till the *Thames* was able to come up and help him off.

By 6 p.m. on the 14th the squadron got back to Gibraltar, having captured the French 74, *San Antonio*, and on arrival recaptured the *Hannibal*, which was still lying off Algecirez. Lieutenant Dumaresq was sent home with the news, and when St. Vincent received him he shook him warmly by the hand, exclaiming with regard to De Saumarez:

"I knew it—I knew it—I knew the man—I knew what he could do. It is the most daring thing that has been done this war. It is the finest thing—I knew it would be so."

St. Vincent afterwards wrote to De Saumarez:

"The hardy enterprise of July 6th merited complete success, but all who know the baffling winds of Gibraltar can readily account for the event of it. The astonishing efforts made to refit the crippled ships in Gibraltar Mole surpasses anything of the kind in my experience. And the final success in making so great an im-

pression on the very superior force of the enemy crowns the whole."

The following letter from Admiral Mazzaredo, written a month later to Sir James Saumarez, shows how the spirit of courtesy between the nations of England and Spain prevailed to the last.

"Isle of Leon,
"*August 17th*, 1801.

"Esteemed Sir,

"The reports which have been current—that the burning of the two royal ships on the night of the 12th arose from the use of red-hot balls by the British, which were fired at them, have existed only among the ignorant public, and have not received credit from any persons of condition, who well know the manner of combating of the British Navy.

"At the same time, they give the greatest credit to the assertion of your Excellency that nothing could be more foreign from the truth, and the characteristic humanity of the British nation. I have myself experience of the particular conduct of your Excellency, conformable to your personal character, and to that of your late Commander-in-Chief, his Excellency Lord St. Vincent, in the manner in which in the last blockade of Cadiz he reconciled with the duties of a state of war those attentions and considerations, to alleviate miseries, not connected with the great object, and to secure that good intelligence and friendship, with which two Powers may suspend for a time treating each other as enemies. . . . I will avail myself of every occasion to assure your Excellency of the esteem

and consideration which I profess for your person.

"God grant you may live a thousand years.

"Your most obedient servant,

"JOSÉ MAZZAREDO."

St. Vincent proposed in the House a vote of thanks to Sir James Saumarez and his gallant officers and men, which was seconded by Lord Nelson and carried unanimously.

Soon after the official intelligence of the victory reached England M. Otto, who had been sent by the French to arrange an exchange of prisoners, announced his secret instructions to negotiate terms of peace; and the Treaty of Amiens was definitely signed on March 27th, 1802.

As soon as the ships were dismantled and measures taken to ascertain the state they were in, St. Vincent gave his almost undivided attention to the civil administration of the Navy. In his zeal for reform he encountered at every turn the powerful opposition of the idle and the corrupt; but each succeeding obstacle that he met with merely served to make him more firmly determined to carry out the changes that he felt to be necessary. Not long before this he had written to Lord Spencer that "the civil department of the Navy was rotten to the core, and investigation and reform were wanted in every department." There were at this time two surveyors of the Navy who controlled re-

spectively the dockyards of Woolwich and Deptford, and visited their yards once a week; but the power conferred on them by the Navy Board ended here. Now they were each ordered to inspect their own yards. This was not at all what was wanted. St. Vincent, being greatly incensed at the deplorable mismanagement which he found in every direction, ordered all the resident commissioners in all the yards to place instantly all the books and papers of their respective yards under private seal.

The inspection by the Admiralty commenced early in 1802, and extended through all the dockyards.

While in command in the Mediterranean St. Vincent had been convinced of the corrupt state of those establishments, for he had seen that, while Parliament voted lavish sums for the naval service, the fleet was supplied but scantily, and that, while contractors grew rich and jobbery flourished, the store-houses were empty and the Navy crippled. But he had at that time no idea of the frauds and abuses and the idleness he now met with at every turn and in every yard.

Whole classes of men were borne upon the books of ships in ordinary, and at the same time on board the receiving hulks, thus receiving double pay and provisions, whilst watermen plying for service in their own private boats were entered on the books as receiving, not only

pay as if they were serving in ships, but extra pay for extra duty.

In most of the yards the same items of work were at different periods repeatedly charged and paid for over and over and over again.[1]

In one rope-yard men were paid overtime for what was only a three-hours' day. Another yard let its men out at eleven and four, but never mustered them on their return. In yet another yard the men of an entire department were found to be incapables—boys, infirm, cripples or of unsound mind; and this yard appeared to be little better than an asylum for all those who could not obtain a meal by any other means. Throughout the whole of the yards the old and the young, the strong and the weak, the skilful and the ignorant workmen, were all paid at the same, and that the highest, scale of wages, and generally with addition for overtime. In no dockyard was any balance of expenditure and stock in hand ever contemplated. And one deputy had not been near his yard for four years though the boat-house near his private house had been built at Government expense, and the boat's crew that he used were being paid for as doing duty in the dockyard.

Finding that it was impossible to carry out his reforms for lack of power to convict, some of the delinquents being high-placed and powerful, St. Vincent stopped all further investigation

[1] Tucker, *Life of S. Vincent*, vol. II. p. 150.

and applied for a parliamentary inquiry, and, to prevent the appointment to this inquiry being a farce, or falling under the influence of political jobbers, he demanded that the names of the commissioners should be made public and part of the Bill. The recommendations of the Commission were most drastic, and they laid the foundations for all subsequent improvements in the civil department of the Navy.

Mr. Addington's Government at first opposed and then rejected the Bill, Lord Chancellor Eldon being the only member who gave it his support; but here again St. Vincent's will triumphed, for he refused to sit on the Bench in the House of Lords till he had carried his point. He argued that "No power short of what I demand can search such abuses as I denounce; and no honest or faithful servant can have aught to fear." The Government at length yielded and the Bill passed. The official statement of this Commission, which sat for several years, was received by Parliament with astonishment and by the public with much excitement; but there can be no doubt that from that date public opinion has altered on the points considered, and that we owe in some measure to Lord St. Vincent the purity of officials and the strictness of the arrangements of the present day.

One of the benefits St. Vincent gave to his country and to the Navy was the Breakwater

at Plymouth. In 1800, when St. Vincent first thought of the scheme, Mr. Bowen, the master of the *Centaur*, was ordered to carry out soundings, and he now brought the matter before the Board of Admiralty and afterwards presented a memorial on the subject to the King in Council.

Though the breakwater was not finally built till Lord Melville was at the head of the Government, it is to St. Vincent that credit belongs for the original plan, and to him we owe the fine protected anchorage of the Sound at Plymouth.

CHAPTER XIII

ST. VINCENT'S TROUBLED POLITICAL LIFE

1802—1807

> Old age hath yet his honour and his toil;
> Death closes all: but something e'er the end,
> Some work of noble note, may yet be done.
>
> TENNYSON.

THE Admiralty Office now absorbed St. Vincent's whole time and attention, and he found his labours there so arduous and engrossing that he twice requested the King to relieve him of this duty; but the King, who used to term him "My old Oak!" would not part with him.

St. Vincent was strongly opposed to a renewal of the war with France, and he hoped and believed that the Peace of Amiens would be a lasting one. Acting on this belief and on his knowledge of the unsatisfactory and disorganised condition of the French fleets, he had carried out great economies in the Navy. He seems to have had a passion for economy, and in two years the expenses had been reduced by two millions. At the same time he was careful not to reduce the number of ships and men below the strength that would be required in the event of England being compelled to resume hostilities. Pitt and

the Opposition derided the idea of peace, and, wishing to assail the Addington Cabinet, made an attack on its leading figure, Lord St. Vincent, and on his naval policy. For some months the British Cabinet had been making earnest representations to France on her aggressions and on the powerful armaments she was collecting, and by the time Parliament met in November 1802 affairs had reached a very critical stage. The King's speech stated:

"In my intercourse with Foreign Powers I have been actuated by a sincere desire for the maintenance of peace. It is, nevertheless, impossible for me to lose sight of that established system of wise policy by which the interests of other States are connected with my own, and I cannot be indifferent to any international change in their relative conditions and strength."

Bonaparte's annexations, his insolent denial to England of any right to a voice in the affairs of the Continent, his dishonesty in the matter of the withdrawal of the French troops from Holland, his persistence in calling on England to evacuate Malta, and the hostile measures which he adopted against English trade, soon convinced all but a few that war with France was inevitable. There could be no peace with a ruler who endeavoured to force England to adhere to the letter of a treaty which he was himself violating daily, in spirit and in substance.

Napoleon wanted time to arm France against us at sea, and to revive French shipping; but the English Government, urged by public opinion, frustrated his schemes by forcing on war, which was declared in May 1803. Within forty-eight hours of the declaration of war Admiral Cornwallis, with thirty-three sail of the line, held Brest in blockade. We were, fortunately, able to blockade our enemy with overwhelming forces from the beginning of the war. Nelson took the command in the Mediterranean and Admiral Pellew cruised off Ferrol, Sir Sidney Smith commanded in the North Sea, and Keith took charge of the reserves in the Downs.

In view of these facts, it is a little difficult to understand how St. Vincent came to be blamed for having insufficient forces, and why there should have been such a fear of invasion. It is true Bonaparte did his best to frighten England. He collected a swarm of flat-bottomed boats between the spring of 1803 and the autumn of 1805, and assembled an army at Boulogne. But what chance would troops embarked on this flotilla have had—even in the finest weather—of arriving off the coast of Great Britain when we had at the time three concentric barriers of ships between the two coasts to prevent it?

"It must not be forgotten that Napoleon was betrayed by those around him. Spies known

as the 'he friend,' the 'she friend,' and the 'son of the friend,' had access to his most secret papers and communicated them to a certain Comte d'Antraigues, an exiled French Royalist attached to the Prussian mission in Saxony, and through him the information reached the British Government."[1]

Knowing that he was betrayed by these spies, Napoleon tried to nullify their efforts by the manufacture of false information. He was a past-master in this form of intrigue. He wrote false instructions and allowed the vessels conveying them to be captured. Pitt seems to have been completely misled by all these preparations and schemes, and thought that St. Vincent, when First Lord, should have built more gun-boats and other vessels of light draft to destroy the boats which were being fitted out at the various French ports. St. Vincent, on the other hand, held that the command of the sea provided by our overwhelming force of large ships was in itself a sufficient protection for our coasts, and the outcome proved him to have been in the right. Napoleon's officers told him the truth about the condition of his ships with perfect candour.

Sir Edward Pellew, a very competent witness, speaking in the House of Commons, March 15th, 1804, declared :

[1] David Hannay, *A Short History of the Royal Navy*, p. 442.

"I know, sir, and can assert with confidence, that our Navy was never better formed, that it was never better supplied, and that our men were never better fed and clothed. Have we not all the enemy's ports blockaded, from Toulon to Flushing? Are we not able to cope anywhere, with any force, the enemy dares to send out against us? And do we not outnumber them at every one of these ports we have blockaded? Sir, during the time I was stationed off Ferrol, I had ships passing from the Channel fleet to me every three weeks or a month, and so much was the French commander shut up in that port deceived by these appearances that he was persuaded, and I believe is to this hour, that I had twelve ships instead of six under my command, and that I had two squadrons to relieve each other, one of six inside, and one of six outside." [1]

At the moment of Pellew's speech, a year after the war began, the whole sea-going naval force at Napoleon's disposal (including vessels belonging to the Batavian Republic which were stationed at the Cape or in the Indian Ocean) did not exceed 48 of the line and 37 frigates. At that time England had in commission 88 ships of the line, 13 ships of 50 guns, 125 frigates, and a swarm of smaller craft. Moreover, we had every means of collecting stores, while the French had but few.[2]

Nevertheless, the number of conflicting documents of that time is so great and the authorities

[1] Parliamentary debates, 1804.

[2] David Hannay, *A Short History of the Royal Navy*, p. 439.

on either side are so evenly balanced that it is no easy matter to arrive at a true conclusion. On the one hand, we have a letter from Nelson to St. Vincent, dated July 8th, 1803 :

"By the Toulon report your lordship will see we are not very superior, if any, in point of numbers, for it seems uncertain whether there are not more than the seven ships clearly in a state of forwardness. My reports from Italy say nine, five frigates and some corvettes."

On the same day he wrote to Mr. Davidson :

"I only joined the fleet this day, and I find the French in Toulon are equal to me at this moment, but I do not think they will come out till they have a greater superiority. If they do, I shall be agreeably disappointed. The event, I trust, although we are miserably short of men, would be glorious."

On the other hand, we have Admiral Villeneuve's account of the ships in Toulon where he commanded.

"L'escadre de Toulon paraissait fort belle sur la rade, les équipages bien vêtus, faisant bien l'exercice ; mais dès que la tempête est venue, les choses ont bien changé.

"Ils n'étaient pas exercés aux tempêtes.

"Le peu de matelots, confondus parmi les soldats, ne se trouvaient plus. Ceux-ci malades de mer ne pouvaient se tenir dans les batteries. Ils encombraient les ponts.

"Il était impossible de manœuvrer. De là des vergues cassées, des voiles emportées, car, dans

toutes nos avaries, il-y-a eu bien autant de maladresse, ou d'inexpérience, que de défaut de qualité des objets délivrés par les arsenaux."

After a careful study of all the varying and conflicting statements which have come down to us in regard to the relative strength of the French and British forces, I am confident that our fleets were at this time not only superior in numbers to those of the enemy, but were also enormously superior in training and seamanship. The value of these latter qualities could only be fully appreciated by men like St. Vincent, who had always insisted on them and had striven earnestly to attain them. Neither Napoleon nor Pitt ever realised their importance sufficiently.

Nelson used to boast that he did not blockade Toulon, but laboured to entice the French out, so as to be able to engage them outside; but in order to do this it was necessary to get speedy information, and this was not often possible, for Nelson was some distance off, and seldom at his rendezvous. He also seems to have had a fixed idea that Villeneuve meant to sail for Egypt—which was never his intention. Bonaparte's idea was to attack our West Indian colonies, and thus draw away our ships from home waters and get the mastery of the Channel. In this plan he so far succeeded as to induce Nelson to follow him there eventually.

It was on March 15, 1804, that Pitt began his attack by moving for certain papers connected with Naval Administration, admitting that he wanted them in order to move a vote of censure on the First Lord of the Admiralty. In his speech Pitt confessed that he admired the uncommon valour of St. Vincent and his glorious achievements. To him, he said, we are highly indebted for shedding extraordinary lustre on our national glory. But he could not approve of his work in a civil capacity.

The motion to produce the papers in question was rejected by a majority of seventy-one; but the resignation of Mr. Addington's Government followed, and with it the retirement of St. Vincent from office. He seems never to have forgiven Pitt for the attack he had made upon him, which upset all his schemes for the reform of the dockyards and ships. Pitt offered him the command of the Channel Fleet, which offer he indignantly refused.

St. Vincent's account of the matter is given in the following letter:

"Some months after Mr. Pitt came into office the last time a request was made to me by his Cabinet, through Lord Sidmouth, to take command of the fleet, which I spurned at unless Mr. Pitt unsaid all he had said against me in the House of Commons—and unless any unfavourable impression should have been made in the mind of the King on this refusal, I asked for an audience at Windsor, and humbly submitted that

though my life was at the disposal of His Majesty and of my country, I was the guardian of my own honour, and could not trust it in the hands of Mr. Pitt after the treatment I had received from him."

The King, it appears, questioned him about the discipline of the Navy, and asked whether it was satisfactory, and whether it had improved since he had last held command in it. St. Vincent replied that "it was worse; that in the short peace it had been seriously relaxed, and, the flag-officers not having maintained as strict a discipline as they might have done, the war commenced under a disadvantage." The King then asked: "Under these circumstances, and holding these views, are you justified in refusing a request to take command of the Channel Fleet?" He replied, "Yes, your Majesty, I am. My honour is in mine own keeping"; and he kept to his resolve until the change of Ministry in 1806.

The want of discipline seems to have been most noticeable in the home ports, if we may judge from St. Vincent's letters about the "profligacy and debauchery on board certain hulks" which appear to have been chiefly due to the absence of the captain and officers, for at that time, when a ship went into dock, her crew were placed on board a hulk.

Amongst the many reforms instituted by St. Vincent may be mentioned the appointment of

a general inspector of all hospitals, infirmaries, and ships, in commission in the person of Dr. Baird. In order that he should have as free a hand as possible, and not be interfered with, he was instructed to report direct to the Secretary of the Admiralty. It would be difficult now for any one to believe the abuses that he found to be going on, for, now that our hospitals are raised to a high state of efficiency, the part that Dr. Baird played in helping to reform them has been forgotten.

St. Vincent was very much opposed to the Government's proposal to enrol a force of Sea Fencibles. Relying, as he did, on the defence of the coasts by ships, he looked on all money spent on men who might never see a shot fired as useless expenditure. But he was overruled on this point, and the force was duly instituted. The cost of maintaining it, which had originally been estimated at £100,000 a year, rapidly increased to £150,000. St. Vincent found it impossible to get rid of it, though he described it as "an item in my estimates of no use, except to calm the fears of the old ladies, both in and out."

That St. Vincent, with such able advisers as Troubridge and Markham, should have been accused by Pitt of not building enough ships, and especially blamed for not building gunboats for the purpose of attacking Napoleon's flat-bottomed boats, seems to be, on the face of it, absurd, and can only be explained by the sup-

position that political jobbery and interests were at the bottom of the attack made upon him. How little foundation there was for it is shown by the following letter written by Sir Edward Pellew, a notable and most competent authority on naval affairs:

"I see a triple naval bulwark composed of one fleet, acting on the enemy's coast; of another, consisting of heavier ships stationed in the Downs, ready to act at a moment's notice; and a third close to the beach, capable of destroying any portion of the enemy's flotilla that might escape the vigilance of the other two. Again—as to those gun-boats that have been recommended—they are the most contemptible force that can be employed.

"As to the possibility of the enemy being able, in the narrow seas, to pass through any of our blockading and protecting squadrons with all that secrecy and dexterity, and by those hidden means that some worthy people expect, I really, from anything that I have seen in the course of my professional experience, am not disposed to concur in it."

Indeed, practically the whole of the evidence at our disposal goes to prove that the attack on St. Vincent was as uncalled for as it was unfair.

Mr. Charles Yorke considered the charge brought against the Earl as frivolous from beginning to end, and Mr. Fox concluded by moving that:

"It appears to this House that the conduct of the Earl of St. Vincent in his late naval administration has added an additional lustre to his exalted character, and is entitled to the approbation of this House."

This motion was carried without a division, and here we may let the matter rest.

While Lord Melville was discharging the duties of First Lord under Pitt, St. Vincent resided quietly at his house at Rochetts.

On the death of Pitt, in 1806, a change of ministers took place, and Lord Howick was placed at the head of the Naval Administration. Lord St. Vincent having now reached the age of seventy-one, had every right to expect he would be allowed the enjoyment of his well-earned retirement; yet such was not the case.

Just as his predecessor, Lord Howe, at the same age was called upon to quell the mutiny at Spithead and St. Helens, so St. Vincent was now called upon to take upon himself a task even more prolonged and arduous—the command of the Channel Fleet. He must have been possessed of most extraordinary vigour of both body and mind to have undertaken at that age another naval campaign—and one that was likely to be attended with more than usual difficulties.

The Hon. William Cornwallis was at this time Commander-in-Chief of the Channel Fleet, and on February 6th, 1806, St. Vincent wrote to him with great courtesy explaining how he had

ADMIRAL THE EARL OF ST. VINCENT, K.B.

From an engraving by H. Robinson after the painting by John Hoppner in St. James's Palace.

already refused the Channel command, when offered to him by Pitt, and going on to add :

"I am now called upon again to serve, and in the state the Empire is reduced to I feel it an imperative duty to obey the call, with only one repugnance, which arises out of the high respect and esteem I have for you ; and I beg you will rest assured that every possible delicacy will be paid to your zealous services, for no man regards you more sincerely than

"Yours, etc.,

"ST. VINCENT."

St. Vincent now hoisted the Union at the main, as admiral of the fleet, on board the *Hibernia*, and in March 1806 we find him writing to Admiral Markham from off Ushant. Here he remained keeping up a strict and rigid blockade of the French fleet until August 8th, 1807. Then he was ordered to proceed to the Tagus, for the purpose of inducing and assisting the House of Braganza to emigrate from Portugal, which was then in a state of revolution, anarchy, and civil war. An army of 30,000 men had been despatched by Napoleon and was cantoned at Bayonne, threatening to march upon Lisbon.

We had sent an Embassy, a strong squadron, and a large body of troops to assist our allies, and to make sure that, if Bonaparte did enter Lisbon, he should find neither ships nor stores there. Brest was left to Sir Charles Cotton. Apart from his advanced age, St. Vincent was

admirably fitted for the work he had now to do. Not only was he a master in the art of managing men, he was also very popular with the Portuguese, and was a *persona grata* at the Court of Lisbon. His courtesy and tact in co-operating with troops, and his energy and promptitude in action, all justified his selection. His plans for the compulsory removal of the Royal Family and the ships to Brazil were well laid, but they were not yet required, and he had to return to Brest.

Here he received the news of Mr. Fox's death in October, and at once wrote to Lord Howick offering to resign, but with some difficulty was prevailed upon to remain, for the good of the country.

About this time St. Vincent suffered a family bereavement. Two of his nephews had distinguished themselves in the Navy—a fact which caused him the greatest pleasure; for, though he would have shrunk from advancing a relative, simply because he was a relative, and was rather inclined to require more from his own kindred than from others—yet he was proud to find these two were doing good service. Unfortunately, whilst one of them—Captain William Henry Jervis, the heir-presumptive to his title—was passing from the *San Josef* to his new ship, the *Tonnant*, off Brest, during a heavy gale with much sea running, his boat filled and sank and he was drowned. In writing to his sister, Mrs. Rickets, St. Vincent says:

"I was so overwhelmed I could with difficulty write a sentence to his wife or mother. My attention to the two orphans—which these dear little girls [1] are—will be redoubled."

This loss weighed very heavily on the admiral, and he found it difficult to detach his mind from it to his public business.

In regard to his other nephew, Captain William Parker, we have the following letter from Nelson written on the anniversary of the battle of St. Vincent from Toulon on February 14th, 1804.

"Most cordially do I hail and congratulate you on the return of St. Valentine, and may you, my dear lord, live in health to receive them for many happy years. This morning your nephew, Captain Parker, has very much pleased me (as indeed he always does). On Sunday 12th I sent him to look into Toulon. As he was reconnoitring under Sepet he saw a frigate rounding Porquerolles. The wind was right out of harbour at north.

"At first the frigate seemed desirous to bring him to action, but the determined approach of the *Amazon* made him fly with every rag of sail. He ran through the Grand pass, and got well under Bregançon. Some of the ships had hoisted their yards up. I am rather glad that Parker did not bring her to action, for I think they must have come out and taken him; but I admire his spirit and intention to attack her under all the disadvantages of situation, and such conduct will, some happy day, meet its reward."

[1] A reference to Captain Jervis's two sisters.

Lord Howick's successor at the Admiralty was Mr. Thomas Grenville, and as soon as the winter set in and the main body of the fleet returned to Tor Bay St. Vincent obtained permission from him to reside on shore at Rame House, near Cawsand Bay, and from this onward he never returned to active life at sea. For a few months his flag flew on board such ships as came into sight, but it was now hauled down[1] never again to be rehoisted. It is due to Mr. Grenville to state here that St. Vincent described him as "the truest patriot, the most upright man, the most faithful, straightforward servant of the public that I ever met with in any situation."

Early in 1807 George III. decided to get rid of the Ministry, and Mr. Grenville retired from the Admiralty. Before leaving he could have given appointments right and left to the many applicants by whom he was besieged; but, instead of doing so, he gave St. Vincent *carte blanche* to select all the officers for these appointments, observing that this was no more than was due to him, and that he was confident the Earl would be guided in his selection by merit alone.

Almost immediately after St. Vincent had struck his flag for the last time the King commanded his presence at a private audience and expressed his great regret that he would not continue in command of the Channel Fleet. St.

[1] Early in 1807, on change of Ministry.

Vincent replied: "Sire! my life ever has been, and ever will be, at your Majesty's disposal; but I am guardian of mine own honour, and I could not place it in the hands of your present ministers."

"Well, Lord St. Vincent, you have now quitted active service, as you say, for ever. Tell me, do you think the naval service is better or worse than when you first entered it?"

"Very much worse, may it please your Majesty."

The King. "How so? How so?"

"Sire, I have always thought that a sprinkling of nobility was very desirable in the Navy, as it gives some sort of consequence to the service; but at present the Navy is so overrun by the younger branches of nobility and the sons of members of Parliament, and they so swallow up all the patronage and so choke the channel to promotion that the son of an old officer, however meritorious both their services may have been, has little or no chance of getting on."

The King. "Pray, who was serving as Captain of the Fleet under your lordship?"

"Rear-Admiral Osborne, sire, the son of an old officer."

The King. "Osborne, Osborne! I think there are more than one of that name admirals."

"Yes, sire! there are three brothers, all admirals."

The King. "That's pretty well for democracy, I think!"

"Sire, the father of those officers served twenty years as first lieutenant with my dear friend, Admiral Barrington, who had never sufficient interest to get him beyond the rank of commander. He was of necessity obliged to send all his sons to sea, and to my knowledge they never had anything more than their pay to live upon; nevertheless, they always appeared as gentlemen. They were self-educated, and they got on in the service upon the strength of their own merits alone; and, sire, I hope your Majesty will pardon me for saying I would rather promote the son of an old deserving officer than of any noble in the land."

The King mused for a minute or two, and then said: "I think you're right, Lord St. Vincent—quite right!"

This interview between an intensely aristocratic king and a subject who, with all his loyalty, was a thorough-going Whig and democrat, is most interesting; for, though poles apart in politics, they were essentially at one in their devotion to the interests of the State.

CHAPTER XIV

THE END

1807—1823

Poterat-ne tantus animus non jucundam efficere senectutem.
CICERO.

THE bodily infirmities of old age now compelled St. Vincent to withdraw from all active service for the country; but he did so, as Sheridan aptly put it, with the triple laurels gained from the enemy, the mutineer, and the corrupt.

Brenton tells us that he was fond of hearing the names of naval officers read over to him.

"When I have been with him he has often begged me to read down the list, as it brought incidents to his mind. He walked the room as I read, and now and again he would stop: 'That is a fine fellow, sir; a good man, that! one of the right sort.' Then, again, he would say, 'Ah, that is one of my sins that I have got to answer for. He was one of my Lady Betty's hard bargains, and I was talked into it.'"

He was apt to imbibe strong prejudices in favour of, or against, particular officers; but they were founded mostly on their own conduct. A ready and cheerful attention to duty, a willing alacrity in the execution of orders, a

prompt obedience to command, were always sure to obtain his esteem and patronage; whereas neglect of duty, or indifference in the execution of it, inattention to orders, or direct disobedience, were visited by his marked dislike. He possessed a remarkable faculty for gauging men's characters. His eye was so keen and penetrating that his friends used to say he looked through them. He knew the character of every officer who had ever served with, or under, him.

Nothing provoked him more than to hear of a naval officer being in debt. "They should live on a ration, sir! I have done it myself, and would do it again, sooner than borrow money." He disliked having young married officers in his fleet, as he said they were the first to run into port, and the last to come out of it. He was extremely punctual in all his concerns, even the most trifling. He answered every letter the moment he received it; and, though a great economist of both money and time, he was liberal with both, and contributed largely to public charities.

From the moment he entered a room, he attracted the attention of every one in it. His natural demeanour was grave, but he had the manners of a polished courtier and an accomplished statesman. His domestic life was an example amongst public men and his hospitality unbounded. Constant as a friend, he was kindness itself in his retirement, and charmed

people with his fund of humour. He never failed to command the attention of the people he met, and would enter into all their cares, making them his own, yet at other times be as cheerful as the merriest of the party.[1]

His expression was generally thoughtful and dignified, and indicated a firmness which no man could shake. The resolute determination of the large blue eye beneath his bold and prominent brow was masterful and overpowering. However numerous the circle around him, nothing escaped his penetrating notice. His voice was very powerful, but capable of great modulation. He always wore the Star of the Order of the Bath.[2] We are told that a child one day asked him where he found it. He

[1] On one occasion Sir Pulteney Malcolm was staying in the house with him and also an Eton boy who was absorbed in his day's cricket. Sir Pulteney remarked that he never knew an Eton boy who could read English. St. Vincent happened to know that the boy was an excellent reader, as he had read the newspapers to him for hours at a stretch; so, as soon as the boy returned from his cricket, he said to him: "Do you see that gentleman, sir? Then go and sit close beside him, and read that to him" (handing him a long list of bankruptcies, etc.). "and read it till he tells you to stop. Sing out, sir!" The boy obeyed implicitly. The guests smiled, except Sir Pulteney, who laughed outright, while St. Vincent looked on sternly. But at last Sir Pulteney had had enough of it, and exclaimed: "Stop—stop! for Heaven's sake, stop!" and then St. Vincent said: "And now, Sir Pulteney, as young Trimsharp *can* read, do you mark, and learn, and inwardly digest."

[2] The K.B., or Order of the Bath, was a much-valued distinction in those days, and far more coveted than the ubiquitous K.C.B. of the present day, which was instituted after St. Vincent's time.

replied: "I found it upon the sea, and if you become a sailor, and search diligently, perhaps you may find just such another."

He was a most willing and trusty counsellor to the young, and he would listen patiently to all they said, even if it were nonsense; and then gently, and with great delicacy, show them where they were wrong, and give them advice, after which he was ready and eager to enter into all their amusements. His favourite guests were his brother officers, and he loved to have them and their families to stay with him. No doubt his reasons for this preference were very much the same as those expressed by the famous Earl of Essex, and quoted by Hallam in his *Literature of the Middle Ages*:

"For most of those that are accounted the chief men of action I do confess that I do entirely love them. They have been my companions both abroad and at home; some of them began their wars with me, most have had their places under me, and many have had me witness of their risings, from captains and lieutenants and private men, to those charges which since by their virtues they have obtained. Now that I have tried them, I would choose them for my friends. I love them for mine own sake, for I find sweetness in their conversation, strong assistance in their employment with me, and happiness in their friendship. I love them for my country's sake, for they are England's best armour of defence, and weapons of offence. If we may have peace, they have purchased it; if we must have war, they must manage it.

Before action, Providence makes me cherish them for what they can do; in action, necessity makes me value them for the service they do; after action, experience and thankfulness make me love them for the service they have done."

Lord Brougham, in writing of St. Vincent, says:

"His conduct was always high and decorous. He had a singular aversion to cant of any kind, and more especially of overdone Pharisaical morality. He never lowered, in his own person, the standard of private any more than of public virtue; holding all conspicuous men as trustees for the character of the people, and, in some sort, representatives of the people's virtues."

Prizing nothing higher than perfect independence, St. Vincent always lived within his means; but he detested shabbiness or meanness of any kind. In his own habits he was economical, and in public or private expenditure no one was more pure.

He never really recovered from the loss of Troubridge, whose ship, the *Blenheim*, was last seen on the Cape Station in the month of February 1807. In a letter written about this time he says: "O *Blenheim*, *Blenheim*! where are you?" and with every mail which arrived he would exclaim, "Any news of the *Blenheim*? Where is the *Blenheim*? What can have become of the *Blenheim*?" and he would be heard repeating this to himself over and over again during the day, his spirits being much depressed.

"I shall never see Troubridge's like again," he would say. "I loved that invaluable man!"

"George Grey writes me that the *Monmouth* is fitting for a flag, and that report says O'Brien Drury is to proceed to the Cape of Good Hope in her with the appointment of command. But if this is so, the Admiralty have given up the *Blenheim*! for unless our incomparable friend Troubridge applied to be relieved, it is hardly possible such a measure should be taken, if the existence of him were not despaired of, the idea of it, has affected me very much. I am quite upset and cannot banish melancholy, melancholy from my mind sleeping or waking."

In a letter in 1806, in reply to some note from Sir Isaac Coffin, he wrote: "Many thanks for your suggestion, but Sir Thomas Troubridge is higher in my estimation than the list of the whole Navy can produce"; and on another occasion he called him the Bayard of the British Navy.

"Sir Thomas Troubridge was the staunch supporter of Liberal principles, of freedom, and of thorough reform; in his private life the idol of his family, the charm of society, the rock of friendship, and the fortress of honour."[1]

Being very deaf, he showed great attention in endeavouring to hear what was said. His manners were forcible, animated, and quick—sometimes impatient.

Having been at sea from a very early age,

[1] Tucker.

he had the knowledge acquired by a vigorous understanding collecting information in the course of a professional career. The extent of his knowledge in whatever related to the naval service, the acuteness of his intellect, his perception of all the points however remote, and of all the circumstances, however various, which ought to be considered, his sound judgment, his fearless decision, and his excellent counsel were almost without parallel.

St. Vincent was not able to attend the House of Lords except on great occasions. In 1808 he spoke strongly against the expedition to Copenhagen, and the abduction of the Danish fleet, which he regarded as dishonourable, and pointed out that it was far easier for this country to be invaded from Boulogne than for Zealand and the Danish fleet to be taken by France through Holstein.

In politics St. Vincent was a thorough-going Whig, and, like most strong partisans, gave his political opponents but little credit for patriotism. This defect was accentuated by his stubborn and headstrong character, and though one does not care to dwell on it but prefers to think of him as the great seaman and statesman he undoubtedly was, yet one of his partisan speeches, made at the opening of Parliament in 1809, may be quoted here. The curious will find other specimens of his oratory recorded in Tucker's Life or in parliamentary history.

Immediately after the ministerial address had been read, St. Vincent rose, and, addressing the House, said:

"My lords, when I addressed a few observations at the commencement of last session of Parliament to your lordships I thought my age and infirmities would preclude my ever again offering myself to your lordships' consideration; but, such have been the calamitous events which have occurred since that period that I am once more induced, if my strength will admit, to trouble your lordships with a few of my sentiments.

"Indeed, we have wonderfully extraordinary men in these days! men who have ingenuity to blazon with the finest colours, to sound with the trumpet and the drum, in fact to varnish over the greatest calamities of the country, and who endeavour to prove that our greatest misfortunes ought to be considered as our greatest blessings. Such was their course of proceeding after the disastrous Convention of Cintra; and now in his Majesty's speech they have connected another disaster with a new triumph. They talk of the glorious victory of Talavera—a victory which has led to no advantage and had all the consequences of a defeat. The enemy took prisoners the sick and the wounded, and finally even our troops were obliged to retreat. I do not mean to condemn the conduct of the officers employed, either in Spain or Walcheren. I believe they did their duty.

"There is no occasion to wonder at the awful events that have occurred; they are caused by the weakness, infatuation, and stupidity of ministers, and I will maintain, my lords, that we owe all our weakness, all our disgrace to the

weakness and incapacity of his Majesty's present Administration. But what could the nation expect from men who come into office under the mask of vile hypocrisy and have maintained their places by imposture and delusion? Look at the whole of their conduct. The first instance of the pernicious influence of their principles was their treatment of a country at peace with us: in a state of profound peace, they attacked her unprepared, and brought her into a state of inveterate hostility. This was a foul act, and the day may yet come when repentance will be too late. Their next achievement was to send one of the ablest men who ever commanded an army into the centre of Spain, unprovided with every requisite for such a dangerous march. If Sir John Moore had not acted according to his own judgment, in the perilous situation to which he had been wantonly exposed, every man of that army had been lost to the country. By his transcendent judgment, however, that army made one of the ablest retreats recorded in the pages of history, and, while he saved the remnant of his valiant troops, his own life was sacrificed in the cause of his country. And what tribute had his Majesty's ministers paid to his valued memory? what reward conferred for most eminent services? Why, my lords, even in this place, insidious aspersions have been cast on his character, and people are employed in all parts of the town to calumniate his conduct. But, in spite of all the runners and dependents upon the Administration, the character of this general will always be revered as one of the ablest the country ever saw. After this abortive enterprise, another equally foolish, equally unsuccessful, and no less ruinous was carried into execution. Another general was sent into the heart of the peninsula under similar cir-

cumstances, and the glorious victory alluded to has been purchased by the expenditure of our best blood and treasure. But what, my lords, shall I say when I come to mention the expedition to Walcheren? Why, I think it almost useless to say a word on the subject. It was ill-advised, ill-planned; even partial success in it was doubtful, and its ultimate object is impracticable. It is high time that Parliament should adopt strong measures, or else the voice of the country will resound like thunder in their ears. Anybody may be minister in these days, and ministers may flow from any corrupted source; they pop in and pop out like the man and woman in a peasant's barometer; they rise up like tadpoles. They may be compared to wasps, to hornets, and to locusts. They send forth their pestilential breath over the whole country, and nip and destroy every fair flower in the land. The conduct of his Majesty's Government has led to most frightful disasters, which are nowhere exceeded in the annals of our history. The country is in that state which makes peace inevitable; and it will be compelled to make peace, however disadvantageous, because it will be unable to maintain a war so shamefully misconducted, and so disastrous in its consequences."

This speech, full of caustic good sense, but somewhat spoilt by its bitterness, is a good specimen of his strenuous entrances into debate on the side of the Whigs and against the Government. He was specially strong on the subject of religious toleration, and would support the worship of God in any form which acknowledged charity and justice, provided he thought it

sincere. His zeal for freedom of conscience shone out through all his dealings. When the Bill for Catholic emancipation came up for discussion he declared that—

"Everything that is dear to us is imperilled upon this. Rebellion in Ireland depends upon it. I am full of apprehension that any failure of engagement to the Irish Catholics will never be forgiven; and then, if the French Emperor could throw ten or fifteen thousand men into that country we might lose it. God forbid that any, even the smallest, alteration should be made in the Bill to enable Catholics to serve in the Navy or Army."

His tolerance is shown by the fact that he joined in helping a Roman Catholic college of Franciscans on his property in Staffordshire, while, with regard to the suppression of the Jesuits, he wrote to a friend in Rome:

"I have heard with indignation that Sir John Cox Hippersley has gone to the Congress at Aix-la-Chapelle with a view to obtain a decree for the extinction of the Jesuits. I therefore beseech you to lay this letter before his Holiness the Pope, as a record of my opinion, that we are not only obliged to that order, the Jesuits, for the most useful learning and discoveries of every description, but that they are now necessary for the instruction of the Catholic youth throughout the world."

He also subscribed liberally to the building of a Jewish chapel and to the maintenance of a

Jewish hospital. He was a great advocate for free corn, and letting its price take its own level.

In spite of his criticisms on the war, he was against making terms with Napoleon in 1812:

"We must not accept any terms of peace with Bonaparte. It is clear no reliance can be placed on any engagement he may enter into. A vigorous effort should be made to rid the world of this horrid disturber of the peace of mankind, nothing short of which can ensure our safety."

After Waterloo, when peace followed, and Napoleon was sent to be imprisoned, he discouraged all the abuse of him that ensued, describing it as vulgar and disgraceful, although he added: "I rejoice that he is so disposed of as in all probability to prevent his again destroying the peace of the world."

Sir Frederick Maitland, captain of the *Bellerophon*, the ship which conveyed Bonaparte to St. Helena, having come in for a good deal of criticism on account of his humane treatment of his prisoner, received a letter from St. Vincent to tell him that he entirely approved of his conduct, a thing which seems to have comforted him not a little, for he replied:

"'BELLEROPHON,'
"*August 9th*, 1815.

"MY DEAR LORD ST. VINCENT,

"Your approbation of my conduct more than repays me for all the vexation and trouble

I have experienced in the execution of a most painful duty.

"I have ever looked up to your lordship as my friend, and the man to whom I was most indebted in this world; it is therefore most grateful to my feelings to find you are satisfied with the manner in which I have conducted myself. I may with truth repeat, his Majesty has not a more loyal subject or one more attached to his country; but, when a man has fallen from such a height as Bonaparte I saw no cause to insult him; some of the papers have abused me for paying him too much respect; but, if I erred, it was not intentionally; and, having passed all my life at sea, I am ignorant of the etiquette of courts. Allow me again to repeat, how proud I feel in your lordship's approbation.

"Your lordship's most attached friend,

"FRED L. MAITLAND."

On receiving a bust of Napoleon from Captain Tower, who sent it to him, saying that it was a present to one who knew how to respect a great and fallen enemy, St. Vincent replied, "I blush for those who trample upon a man many of them feared, and all allowed, in the career of his military glory, to be an astonishing character."

Napoleon was in the habit of discussing various matters with British officers who blockaded St. Helena whilst he was prisoner there, and on one occasion the following conversation took place between him and Captain Bowen:

"St. Vincent is a brave man, and a very good sailor, the greatest the English ever had, for he

kept his fleet in better order. Did he not command off Cadiz when I went to Egypt ? and did he not send Lord Nelson after me ? "

" Yes, he did."

" Were you with him in the battle of St. Vincent ? "

" No."

" Where does Lord St. Vincent live ? "

" In Essex, about sixteen miles from London."

" When you return, if you go to see Lord St. Vincent, make him my compliments, the compliments of an old soldier to a good old English sailor."

In 1816 Lady St. Vincent died, after a long and painful illness, and was buried at Stone, in Staffordshire, where a monument by Chantrey is erected to her memory. Seven years elapsed before the Earl followed her; but, though his mind remained clear, his eye bright and penetrating to the last, the old hulk was battered and worn, and needed repairs that no earthly dockyard could provide.

Had it been possible and necessary, he would doubtless have gladly repaired and used it again for the country he lived and worked for, but the hulks of men, like those of ships, having once served their time, have to be superseded by others; but not so the spirit, which ever goes onward, working in others and inspiring them to follow the example of their predecessors.

• Sir William Parker, St. Vincent's nephew, was

already coming to the front and displaying qualities which afterwards led him to be regarded as one of the best admirals of his time.

Before leaving St. Vincent's life I cannot refrain from mentioning one or two interesting incidents connected with him which show that his last remaining years were by no means idle ones. Captain Edward Palmer, of the *Hebrus*, captured the *Étoile* after a two-hours' action, in eight fathoms of water, close in under the French shore, and, having been brought up under St. Vincent, he presented her flag, the last one captured in the French war, to his "old chief," and it was afterwards placed on the walls of Rochetts, with the following inscription:

THE LAST TRICOLOUR
WON
BY THE NAVAL FLAG OF BRITAIN
THE COLOURS
OF "L'ÉTOILE," CAPTURED BY THE "HEBRUS"
MARCH 27TH, 1814
MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
TO JOHN, EARL OF ST. VINCENT,
THE OFFERING OF A GRATEFUL
PUPIL
TO AN ILLUSTRIOUS MASTER

From Sir John Borlase Warren to Earl St. Vincent, May 4th, 1806

"I take the earliest opportunity of congratulating your lordship on the gallant conduct of your nephew, Captain Parker, who has added a very fine frigate, the *Belle Poule*, to our navy.

She fought well, carrying forty-four guns—eighteen pounders—and is four years old.

"My young friend is entitled to every commendation on my part on every occasion, and is a perfect treasure in such a squadron as that under my orders."

To this St. Vincent replied:

"The favourable opinions you express of the good conduct of my nephew, William Parker, afford me inexpressible satisfaction, and it is no less fortunate than true that he has merited the esteem and regard of every officer he has served under—many of them men of eminence—in the profession from his first entrance into it."

A great deal of trouble was taken in 1816 to induce St. Vincent to become a member of the United Service Club in Charles Street—which was then being formed out of the Military Club; but, owing to his fear that the Government intended to keep up a large standing army, which he thought dangerous to the freedom of the country, and likely to involve us in wars, and to his belief in the efficacy of a strong navy for purposes of defence, he could not be induced to join the club, in spite of the letters of Lord Lynedoch (his old friend, General Grey). But in a letter to the President of the Navy Club he describes himself as its oldest member, having joined it when its meetings were held at the "Crown and Anchor," and having had some share in its formation.

He sent a portrait of Marshal Saxe to the Duke of Wellington, declaring that this was the only tribute in his power to pay to his illustrious deeds, and to Field-Marshal Prince Blücher he forwarded a picture of Frederick the Great, "from an old British seaman, anxious to express his admiration of the glorious achievements performed by your Highness and the brave troops under your command," and adding that "upon his school you have reflected so much honour." [1]

In 1818 St. Vincent's cough became so violent that he had to proceed to a warmer climate, and

[1] To these presents and letters he received the following replies:

"PARIS,
"*February 22nd*, 1816.

"MY LORD,

"The Duchess of Wellington has informed me of your lordship's kindness in presenting me with the portrait of Marshal Saxe. I beg your lordship to accept my best acknowledgments, more particularly for the motive which induced you to send me this portrait. I assure your lordship that I am fully sensible of the value of the approbation of one whose deeds prove that he must be a judge of the merits of others, etc., etc.

"WELLINGTON."

And from Field-Marshal Prince Blücher:

"BRESLAU,
Mai 1, 1816.

"MONSIEUR,

"Le souvenir que votre Excellence a bien voulu me destiner par le tableau du grand Frédéric m'est autant plus cher qu'il vient des mains d'un héros qui illustre cette Marine qui sera à jamais la gloire de l'inébranlable Angleterre. Recevez les remerciments d'un vieux camarade qui se dira à jamais avec estime sincère et haute considération.

"De votre Excellence,

"Le très-humble et très-obéissant serviteur et ami,

"BLÜCHER."

he went to the south of France with Captain and Miss Brenton. He visited Marseilles, Hyères, and Toulon, where he had carried out his strenuous blockade. No doubt this visit brought back to him memories of the Mediterranean command, where he first established the discipline which brought the British Navy to such a pitch of excellence. At Toulon he was well received, the French Government having given orders that he should be shown everything, and he was most hospitably entertained by Admiral Missiesy, who declared him to be as much the father of the French Navy as of the English. He inspected everything, and was made much of by all the people, and treated with great courtesy. He then returned to Hyères, where he remained till the spring of 1819, when he went back to England. Soon after he reached Rochetts. When his gardener proposed to cut down an old oak-tree, which he said was withered, and of no value, St. Vincent replied, "I command you to do no such thing; that tree and I have been long contemporaries; we have flourished together, and together we will fall."

In 1821 King George presented him with a baton, accompanied with a letter expressing his Majesty's esteem and his high sense of St. Vincent's eminent services to his country by his distinguished talents and brilliant achievements. The baton was presented to him by a deputation of Lords of the Admiralty. On August 10th,

1822, the King embarked for an excursion by sea to Scotland, and expressed a wish to see St. Vincent on board. St. Vincent, accordingly, slept that night with the Governor of Greenwich Hospital, Sir Richard Keats, and the next morning he met four old pensioners who had been waiting to see him. He was seen leaning on his stick conversing with them. Afterwards he remarked, "We all were smart fellows in our day." His visit was paid to his Majesty at 8 a.m. on board the *Royal George*. He then proceeded to London and was back at Rochetts by dinner-time. This was a good deal for a man eighty-seven years of age.[1]

On March 13th, 1823, Captain Palmer wrote to his wife, who was a niece of St. Vincent's: "Your noble and most excellent uncle sinks, I fear; but it is gradual."

His old friend, Sir George Grey, was with him at the time and the affection of this visit was very pleasant to him. He had all the papers read to him and commented on all the news with his usual judgment and penetration, but by evening he became gradually weaker, and expired at 8·30 on the same evening (March 13th). He lies buried at Stone, in Staffordshire.

A codicil in his will stated:

"As I have endeavoured to live without

[1] "Then comes the time of death, which in happy lives is very short, but always a time. The ceasing of breath is only the end of death."—RUSKIN, *Fors Clavigera*.

ostentation, it is my anxious desire that no display of pomp should appear at, or after, the interment of my body. I therefore direct that one mourning coach only shall accompany the hearse which conveys my corpse from the place where it may please God I shall depart this life, to Stone, in Staffordshire and that no escutcheons or banners be exhibited on the hearse or in the church, and that no achievements are placed on my houses in town or country."

St. Vincent was a comparatively poor man when he died, and he was succeeded in the peerage by his nephew, Mr. Edward Jervis Rickets.

In 1823 a monument was erected to him in St. Paul's, and when the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Ripon, was asked to defray the cost of it, he paid the following tribute to his memory :

"No man ever commanded a fleet in better style than Lord St. Vincent. No man ever displayed better judgment in the selection of his officers. No man better knew how to enforce discipline. No man ever displayed greater promptitude in action, or made a better use of the means placed at his disposal than that eminent individual. St. Vincent ranks with the greatest of those illustrious characters to whom the country is indebted for its glory and renown."

Unfortunately, the design of this monument in St. Paul's is so bad, and the sculpture so

indifferent, that it can scarcely be regarded as a fitting memorial; but St. Vincent's name and personality still linger in the hearts of his fellow-countrymen, and his work in and for the Navy, and the spirit and tradition which he laboured to establish, have helped to make it the finest service in the world.

APPENDIX

To George Purvis, Esq.

November 26th, 1790.

The real character of sea-officers cannot be masked from each other, and I wish to be judged by that test. I never yet have forsaken any man who served well under me, which I declare, without reserve, you have done, and to my entire satisfaction.

Very sincerely yours,

J. JERVIS.

Evan Nepean to Admiral Lord Hood

ADMIRALTY OFFICE,
May 1st, 1795.

MY LORD,

I have received now (communicated to my Lord Commissioner of the Admiralty) your Lordship's letter of the 28th of last month enclosing a copy of a statement which you had thought it your duty to deliver to Mr. Pitt and Earl Spencer on March 18th subsequent to a conversation you had had the honour to have with them respecting the force necessary to be employed in the Mediterranean—and represented that, since that statement was delivered, the French are reported to have launched two ships of the Line, and that six ships of the Line, three frigates, and a corvette are known to have arrived at that port from Brest, that the British force is reduced by the loss of the *Illus-*

trious since Admiral Hotham's action with the Toulon squadron, in which two of the enemy's line of Battleships were taken and previous to which the *Brunswick* was captured; and you are ready to fix your name to any opinion you have given, you owe it to yourself to have it upon record, particularly as you are convinced the force under your command taken united in the Mediterranean will be very unequal to that of the enemy, and the various services committed to your charge, and that although you have not the shadow of prospect of being able to add lustre to the crown of His Majesty, you entreat to have credit for doing your utmost that it may not be disgraced. In return thereto, I have it in command to acquaint you that their Lordships having given due consideration to the subject of your letter and do not deem it expedient for H.M. service that any officer should be placed in situations from which he thinks proper to state it is his decisive conviction he has not a shadow of prospect of being able to add lustre to the crown of His Majesty, and that the utmost he can do will be to prevent it being disgraced. Their Lordships have, therefore, sent herewith orders for your Lordship's return with the *Victory* to Spithead and have directed Rear-Admiral Dickson to take the remainder of the ships which were intended to have accompanied your Lordship, under his command, and to proceed with them to the Mediterranean without delay, and I have their Lordships' further commands to desire you will return to me the several orders and instructions which have recently been given to your Lordship for proceeding to, as well as for the regulation of your conduct in the event of your arrival and resuming your command of the Mediterranean.

I am, my Lord, etc.,

EVAN NEPEAN.

To Rear-Admiral Mann

"VICTORY," OFF TOULON,
September 27th, 1796.

Should the *Fox* cutter, by which you will receive this, fall in with you before you may have left Gibraltar, you are hereby required to receive on board the squadron under your orders all the provisions in store in that place, etc. etc., and with your whole force with the exception of the *Terpsichore*, *Camden*, and cutter, you are to proceed with the utmost expedition to San Fiorenzo Bay and acquaint me of your approach by a frigate as early as possible.

J. JERVIS.

Rear-Admiral Mann to the Secretary of the Admiralty

"WINDSOR CASTLE," ROSIA BAY, GIBRALTAR,
October 11th, 1796.

I am to desire you will please to acquaint their Lordships, that by the arrival of the *Fox* cutter yesterday, I received an order from the Commander-in-Chief to proceed with the squadron under my order to San Fiorenzo Bay, which for the reason I have already given in my letter of the 5th, added to the reflection that at the time of signing the last order of the 27th ult. Sir John Jervis could not have the least intimation of the situation of the Spanish fleet, as on that day they sailed from Cadiz, and on the 29th passed Gibraltar. I think it my duty on considering the existing circumstances, to defer the attempt of putting the said orders into execution,

supposing it to be impracticable, and that the failure must tend to the loss of the squadron. I shall take the liberty of adding to my former reasons the present idea that strikes me. The Spanish fleet must have joined their friends at Carthagena before this, and from the wind the cutter has had these six days past we may suppose them passing on towards Toulon with a force so superior to our fleet, that it is not reasonable to imagine otherwise but we must retreat. The French fleet from nine to twelve sail joins. The whole proceeds towards Corsica, where, finding our fleet in San Fiorenzo, a blockade must ensue; and I think with their numbers, they must prevent the entrance of any ships in the Gulf. Another thought occurs. Should the enemy reach Toulon before our fleet quits it (which is most likely to happen) it would be highly injudicious to doubt that the Commander of the Enemy's fleet should try to bring ours to action in such a manner as to cut off their retreat towards Corsica, knowing as they must do the very existence of our share of that island depends on our fleet for supplies, and being cut off it must fall an easy conquest. It next occurs in consideration that from the superiority of the Enemy, of which I well know, and the Commander-in-Chief could not be apprized of when he directed the order in question, whether I am not to judge that, had he been in possession of such information, he would ever have given me such orders. I certainly think he would not, as upon the most mature consideration there appears not the least probability of success, but on the contrary risking seven sail, would be highly conceivable, and I trust their Lordships will consider I am acting only from a thorough conviction that I am doing my duty, although I am not complying with the orders of the Commander-in-Chief.

R. MANN.

Extract from Letter to Commissioner Inglefield from Cadiz

I must observe that Captain Fremantle is amongst the most eminent characters in the service. Very few indeed before him, etc.

St. Vincent to Sir R. Lawley

"VILLE DE PARIS," OFF CADIZ,
April 19th, 1797.

SIR,

I am honoured with your obliging letter of March 31st, transmitting the Resolution of the Grand Jury of the County of Stafford expressing their approbation of my services.

I beg leave to assure you that my pride has ever been to emulate the example of that great naval character, Lord Anson, which has produced from an inland county —a Clements, a Gardiner, and other gallant officers, who, with me, have had the good fortune of being placed in situations to attract the notice of our countrymen.

J. JERVIS.

SIR ROBERT LAWLEY.

St. Vincent to Colonel Oakes

May 4th, 1797.

Mazzaredo has embarked several thousand troops on board his fleet, and we understand he relies entirely on them for fighting the guns under the direction of the marine gunners, who are not seamen ; if the weather should happen to be a little rough when we meet they will not give so much trouble, in any event, as we know to a certainty that both soldiers and seamen are very averse to the service and frequently refuse to assist in the ships. Mazzaredo, who I believe to be a gallant man and good officer, is not to be envied.

Lady Nelson to St. Vincent, after Teneriffe

BATH,
September 7th, 1797.

MY LORD,

The letter which your Lordship did me not only the honor, but I must truly say the great kindness of writing by the *Flora* Cutter, I received two days before the arrival of Admiral Nelson, who gives me leave to say, speaks in such affectionate terms of you, that I wish it was in my power to express my feelings or obligations to your Lordship. I am thankful that my husband is restored to me; his spirits are very good, although suffering much pain owing to the want of the indulgencies he had left in your ship—no separate cabin from his brother sufferers, which occasioned his staying more on the deck than was proper. Rest and quietness I hope, will soon restore him to good health.

My husband desires his best respects, and as soon as he has seen the first Lord of the Admiralty he will write you a long letter, giving all the particulars. My obligations are further increased to your Lordship from the pleasing news of your extraordinary favour to my son, who I hope will exert himself and prove worthy of such marked goodness and attention.

Believe me, your Lordship's

Obliged—FRANCES H. NELSON.

EARL ST. VINCENT.

Troubridge to St. Vincent

"CULLODEN,"
August 16th, 1798.

Referring to Captain Barré, commanding the French ship, *Alceste*, a son of the late Duke of Orléans by

Madame Barré, sent to negotiate prisoners with me. He speaks good English, and has been much in England. He is very violent against Billy Pitt. He seems much alarmed for his own head. Although I think him a superior Frenchman, I much doubt that any Frenchman has a particle of honour or principle in him. They appear to me to be as bad as in Robespierre's time. I have now upwards of twenty officers of sorts on board; not one of them acknowledges a Supreme Being, or seems to have any principle. Robbery and murder is no crime with them. As the Turks take no prisoners, I hope the world will get rid of the 40,000 with Bonaparte.

With great respect,

Your lordship's obliged and obedient servant,

T. TROUBRIDGE.

From Lady Spencer to St. Vincent, after the Nile

ADMIRALTY,
October 7th, 1798.

Although I am conscious that by thus addressing your lordship I shall trespass on time the best disposed of, yet I find it impossible to resist the eager impulse I feel to congratulate you on the splendid deed of our friend, Lord Nelson. I do indeed participate in the joy you must feel at so glorious a result of the happy arrangements which enabled him to execute this daring exploit. Never did disinterested zeal and friendship meet with brighter reward than yours has reaped in this victory of your gallant friend. He could not fail of success, as he says himself, when you had placed him to command such a constellation of heroes, and for ever will your country, my lord, venerate the wisdom of a choice they so admirably justified. I am sure it must be madness to attempt expressing to your lord-

ship my delight at the recollection of the last eighteen months. Lord Spencer's Naval Administration has witnessed during that period three victories which, since naval records have been kept in this or any other country, are not to be equalled. Your magnificent achievement saved this country, Lord Duncan's saved Ireland, and I must hope Lord Nelson's saves India. In short, independent of the valour, skill, and intrepidity, these triumphant instances of British superiority have proved their à propos has been something too remarkable not to suppose that a merciful Providence especially protects us. I trust your lordship will excuse my having so long interrupted you, and believe me, with the highest regard and esteem,

Your lordship's much obliged and obedient servant,

LAVINIA SPENCER.

Lady Hamilton to St. Vincent after the Neapolitan Court had left Naples for Palermo

PALERMO,
January 2nd, 1799.

I did not think, my dear lord, the last time I had the honour of writing to you, that my next would have been from this place. Lord Nelson will have informed you of the reason that made it necessary for us to take the steps that have been taken. I am worn out, body and mind, by the anxiety and fatigue I suffered long before our embarkation and after the dangers we ran—I in particular.

The misery of my adorable Queen, who is greater now in her adversity than she was in her prosperity, all, all, contribute to overwhelm me. Sir William, my dear good Sir William, is also with a fever; but, by the help of

James's powders and a good constitution, he is much better. But I have not slept for many nights, and my days are so agitated by the unhappiness of the Queen, who has nobody to unburden herself to but to me, that you, my dear lord, that have such a good heart, although you do not love me, pity me! On Christmas Day, a day of storms, and at sea, a beautiful boy of six years old, the Queen's third son, expired in my arms; taken suddenly in the morning, and, at six in the evening, died. This child was my favourite, and since he was born I never passed a day without seeing him. He was amiable, sprightly, good-humoured, and more sense than the others all put together, and very fond of me. The Queen felt much as a mother, but, my dear lord, nothing could equal my grief. I washed him, laid him out, sat ages with him alone, and a thousand times had his clay-cold lips to my cheek. His woman, her Majesty's women, all dead with sickness and fright. God gave me more strength of body and mind than I thought I had. Her Majesty and the King desire to be most kindly remembered to your lordship. She charged me to say everything that her grateful heart feels to "the brave, loyal, and virtuous Lord St. Vincent."

We have so many obligations to Lord Nelson, who is so good to us all, that I cannot say enough in his praise. We love him dearly, and he loves your lordship, and is always speaking of you, as your merit and worth deserves. God bless you, my dear lord. Let me hear from you. One line of yours will comfort me.

Sir William begs his love and compliments, and believe me, my dearest good lord,

Your ever obliged and grateful
EMMA HAMILTON.

P.S.—I am so worn out I can scarcely write.

Nelson to St. Vincent

PALERMO,
January 19th, 1799.

MY DEAR LORD,

Things are going from bad to worse. I have before me the poor Queen's letter of this morning to our dear Lady Hamilton, who to see is to admire, but to know, is to be added honour and respect. Her head and heart surpass her beauty, which cannot be equalled by anything I have seen. Mack is disappeared; the few remaining cowardly troops disarmed; the Government popular (*democratic*). Very soon the kingdom will take the name, I am sure, of the Parthenope Republic. The dear Queen hopes this shock will not overturn the monarchy in Sicily, but it is to be feared. It is not likely I should abandon my friends in distress, no! then I would keep closer to them; therefore, though I hope for your permission to retire, yet I will not use it, till I think the time proper and honourable for me. Dear Troubridge passed the Faro on the 9th; I hope by this time he has passed Malta. If the thing can be done at Alexandria, it will, I am confident, by our friend. I long to hear good news from Malta, and my heart would have some ease from that happy event.

Lady Hamilton and Sir William are out, but, as I know, it is her wish to write to you, and will, if it is possible.

God bless you, my dear lord and friend.

Believe me

Ever your affectionate

NELSON.

Nelson to St. Vincent

January 24th, 1801.

MY DEAR LORD,

Many thanks for your letter; but, to say the truth, I had rather been under your immediate Com-

mand. My wish and in which I hope you will assist me is to keep *San Josef* for me to return to if I outlive the Baltic. In ten weeks from sailing we must have finished; if not, more shame for us, for I am convinced the combined fleet will put to sea. I have no orders nor are we manned. To-day I gave up paying the *Namur* in order to hasten the departure of the *Triton*. I hope it will answer. I long to get to Torbay and believe me

Ever, my dear lord, your obliged and affectionate

NELSON BRONTË.

EARL ST. VINCENT, K.B.

St. Vincent to Nelson in Reply to his Request for Leave to return from the Baltic on Account of Ill-health.

THE ADMIRALTY,
May 31st, 1801.

MY DEAR LORD,

I have to acknowledge your lordship's letters of April 4th, 5th, 7th, 8th, 16th, and 17th, and to express the deepest concern at hearing from Lieutenant-Colonel Hutchinson that your health has suffered in so material a degree as to require immediate relaxation from the service and public business of all kinds. To find a fit successor, your lordship well knows, is no easy task, for I never saw the man in our profession, excepting Troubridge and yourself, who possessed the magic art of infusing the same spirit into others which inspired his actions, exclusive of other talents and habits of business not common to naval characters—besides that, your complaint commands prompt decision on our part. We have therefore fixed on Vice-Admiral Pole, who, being prepared for another service, can sooner embark and with less inconvenience than any other person, and will, I think, arrive to relieve you from any further anxiety. Your lordship's whole conduct,

from your first appointment to this hour, is the subject of our constant admiration. It does not become me to make comparisons. All agree there is but one Nelson. That he may long continue the pride of this country is the sincerest wish of your truly affectionate

ST. VINCENT.

Nelson to St. Vincent

OFF TOULON,
March 17th, 1804.

MY DEAR LORD,

I have nothing to torment you about whilst I have your support, and the officers of the Fleet look up to me, and can do anything which the number of ships can allow the warmest wishes of my friends to anticipate—take that from me and I am nothing—I am the child of opinion, and the Admiralty can with their breath destroy it; but I rely with confidence upon you, my dear Lord, that alone keeps me up. My general health I think within this last fortnight is better, but my sight is much fell off. I have always thought I should be blind, but if I can but meet the French fleet and do the thing well, I will certainly ask for rest; it is necessary for me. I have sent your nephew this morning to see if he can lay salt upon the tail of a French frigate. I every day see new and excellent traits in him—Hardy is his great pattern about his ship—and a better he could not have. I have only to hope that Buonaparte will be upset by Frenchmen, and then we may have some quiet.

I am ever, my dear Lord,

Yours most faithfully,

NELSON BRONTË.

St. Vincent on Clark's Treatise on Tactics. To Viscount Howick

"HIBERNIA," NEAR USHANT,
June 2nd, 1806.

MY DEAR LORD,

Not having Mr. Clark's treatise on naval tactics with me, I am unabled to give you a detailed opinion upon the influence it has had in the several victories our fleets have obtained over those of France, Spain, and Holland since its publication. I would not for the world subtract from the merits of Mr. Clark, which I have always admitted; yet, on referring to the encyclopædia wherein are copious extracts from the pamphlet, I perceive evident signs of compilation, from Père le Hoste, down to Viscount de Grenier. In truth it would be difficult for the ablest seaman and tactician to write upon the subject without running into one, or all, the French authors.

Inclosed your lordship will receive the best judgment I can form on the claim Mr. Clark has of any merit in the battle of June 1st, and the attempts on the preceding days by Lord Howe, the battles of Camperdown and Trafalgar; *that fought off Cape St. Vincent is totally out of the question.*

I do not see, however, that ministers can withhold some reward to Mr. Clark, after what has been lavished by former Administrations.

Yours ever,
ST. VINCENT.

The Observations of the Earl of St. Vincent on Clark's "Naval Tactics"

Lord Rodney passed through the enemy's line by accident, not design, although historians have given him credit for the latter. This action is, however, not

in question, the book having been first published in 1790.

Lord Howe's attacks upon the fleet of the enemy were at variance with the tactics of Mr. Clark. On May 28th signals were made for a general chase to windward, and to harass the enemy's rear as the ships came up, which was not effected till the close of the day, when the French suffered a three-decker to be cut off, at the risk of being taken possession of, in order to avoid a general action. On May 29th a manœuvre, by which Lord Howe proposed to cut off the rear of the enemy by passing through his line failed in effect owing to the mistake or disobedience of signals, and the only advantage gained was the weather-gauge, which he preserved to the first of June, when he ran down in a line abreast, nearly at right angles with the enemy's line, until he brought every ship of his fleet on a diagonal point of bearing to its opponent, then steering on an angle to preserve that bearing until he arrived on the weather-quarter, and close to the centre ship of the enemy, when the *Queen Charlotte* altered her course and steered at right angles through the enemy's line, raking their ships on both sides as she crossed, and then luffing up and engaging to leeward.

Lord Duncan's action was fought pell-mell (without plan or system); he was a gallant officer (but had no idea of tactics, being soon puzzled with them) and attacked without attention to form or order, trusting that the brave example he set would achieve its object, which it did completely.

The attack at Aboukir furnishes no observation for or against the tactics of Mr. Clark, but his position that "a fleet to windward bearing down at right angles upon the fleet of the enemy must be crippled, if not totally disabled before it can reach the enemy," has been disproved by the more recent action under Lord

Nelson, bearing down in two columns at Trafalgar. Mr. Clark is most correct in his statement of the advantages to be derived from being to leeward of the fleet of the enemy. His mode of attack in columns when to windward has its merits, as have also his statements of the advantages and disadvantages of shifts of wind. Upon the whole, his tactics are certainly ingenious, and worthy the study of all young and inexperienced officers. But the great talent is to take prompt advantage of disorder in the fleet of the enemy, by shifts of wind, accidents, and their deficiency in practical seamanship, to the superior knowledge of which much of our success is to be attributed, and I trust it will never be sacrificed to frippery and gimcrack.

ST. VINCENT.

To his Sister, Mrs. Rickets, with regard to a Provision for Lady Nelson

"HIBERNIA," NEAR USHANT,
June 9th, 1806.

MY DEAR SISTER,

The executors of the late Lord Nelson will receive a good sum from the money granted by Parliament to the persons engaged in the battle of Trafalgar. Give my love to Lady Nelson, and inform her ladyship that the Solicitor-General is the ablest and one of the most honest men that ever appeared in the Chancery Bar. I love Lady Nelson dearly, and admire her dignified pride and spirit. Any assistance I can give her she may command; I shall be in town the latter end of the month, for six days, of which I will thank you to acquaint her ladyship.

Your truly affectionate

ST. VINCENT.

St. Vincent always expected every ship to be repaired instantly, with her own resources. The following is an instance:

When the Honourable Charles Elphinstone commanded the *Egyptian* (lately captured from the French), the head of the foremast split, and he wanted to go into harbour to shift it. He went to the Admiralty the next day. Lord St. Vincent, who was then First Lord, told him that he must do it at Spithead, where the ship was, and asked him what he thought God Almighty made Spithead for. The captain told him there was no sheer-hulk there, so his lordship recommended him to borrow the boatswain of the Portuguese frigate lying there to show him how to make sheers of the lower yards.

ROCHETTS,
September 3rd, 1808.[1]

MY DEAR SIR,

I participate sincerely in your grief and regret for the loss of your gallant young friend and mine, who left us in the midst of his glorious career. I consider the enterprise and conflict in which he fell—taking in all the circumstances of it—as the most eminently distinguished that our naval annals can boast, and I read a short account of our departed hero in yesterday's *Courier* with a melancholy sense of pleasure. It can truly be said of him that he died as he lived, an ornament to his country and an honour to those who bear his name.

I cannot abstain from a tear over him—a weakness, for such it is, which I am not ashamed of confessing to you whose feelings resemble your affectionate

ST. VINCENT.

[1] This letter was sent to a near and dear relative of Captain Hardinge, brother to Sir Henry, who fell in the command of the *S. Fiorenzo*, in action with the *Piedmontese*, a French frigate of very superior force.

Captain E. Palmer to Captain W. Parker

ROCHETTS,
March 14th, 1823.

MY DEAR SIR,

You will be very sorry to learn the sad tidings of the death of Lord St. Vincent, who expired last night between nine and ten o'clock, calmly, and, we hope, without much pain. He retained his faculties until two or three hours before his dissolution. So, full of years and True Glory, the death of your great relative will be the better borne; but his loss will be deeply mourned publicly as well as privately, as incomparably the greatest sea-officer our country ever produced.

Very faithfully yours,

E. PALMER.

Character written under the Portrait of the Earl of St. Vincent by Captain William O'Brien

The Earl of St. Vincent is a man endowed with great and singular abilities, which have fitted him better for the high situation he has held as Commander-in-Chief of the fleet and first Lord of the Admiralty than any person who has preceded him. Possessing a mind profound and firm, a courage exalted, enterprising, and determined; the talent of penetrating and distinguishing the true character of men and employing them on the service best suited to their abilities; depending entirely upon himself, with that confidence which superior ability alone can give, he decides according to the exigency of the moment, his decisions, being found as just as prompt, and never allowing of remonstrances or limitations to his orders, they are carried into effect with a celerity of ardour never before known in the

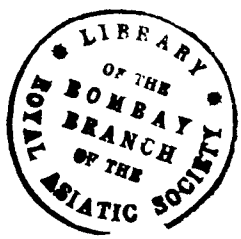
Navy, which by an able, manly, independent, and persevering discipline he has prevented from sinking into a most shameful and disgraceful insubordination, and having shown, on February 14th, 1797, what may be attained by British seamen led on to great and daring enterprise; he has raised it to a more commanding eminence than ever the fleet of England was at before, The whole system of naval discipline made use of to attain this end is comprised in the word "obey."

NOTE

Since this book was written, some letters of Lord St. Vincent to his old secretary, Evan Nepean, in which he made private comments on Nelson, have been published. These letters were never intended for publication, and should have been destroyed, but since they have been made public the following comments on them seem to be necessary.

In one of these letters St. Vincent, in his usual trenchant style, remarks that Nelson is devoured with vanity. Now it can scarcely be denied that, after his accident at the Nile, when he was wounded in the head, Nelson's conduct at Naples as regards Lady Hamilton was not such as St. Vincent was likely to have approved of. Moreover, if there was one thing St. Vincent disliked more than another it was over-decoration, and this was Nelson's great weakness. One cannot fancy St. Vincent sleeping in a cot embroidered like the one at Greenwich, in which Nelson slept. St. Vincent was a good friend of Nelson's, he appreciated him for his courageous conduct and brilliant qualities, and to the last sympathised with and helped Lady Nelson, whom he thought ill-used. But to say that St. Vincent was jealous of Nelson is absurd, and it is equally absurd to

suggest that he bore him any grudge because of the action at law which took place about prize-money. St. Vincent was undoubtedly entitled to the prize-money by the custom of the service at that time for the capture of vessels which was carried out by his orders. The action was perfectly friendly, brought for the purpose of obtaining a judicial decision on a point of equity. And when St. Vincent found that Nelson was claiming the prize-money, he gave instructions to his lawyers to assist him in every way.



INDEX

A

Aboukir Bay, 227
Abraham, Plains of, 16, 17
Academy, Swindell's, 3
Action, Sir H. Keppel's, 44, 45
Action with xebeque, 9, 10
Addington, Premier, 282
Agamemnon, 116
Age, Old, 319
Aix-la-Chapelle, 329
Ajaccio, 136
Alarm, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 89
Albany, 20, 21
Alcmena, 195
Alexandre, 44
Algeeirez, 67, 291
Amazon, 315
Ambassador, French, 42
American Colonies, 41, 51
Amherst, General, 15, 19, 21, 22, 23
Amiens, Treaty of, 85
Anson, Lord, 3, 7, 8, 272
Antelope, 22
Anticosti, 11
Arethusa, 43
Argo, 253
Artois, 58
Asylum, Naval, 280
Audacious, 293
Austria, 52
Austrian troops, 115; generals, 115; prisoners, 135

B

Bailly, 87
Baird, Dr., 1, 269, 271, 310
Baltic, 22, 291
Barbary States, 27
Barfleur, 137, 149
Barham, Lord, Note on, 67
Barré, Colonel, 10, 57, 71, 255
Barrington, 32, 35, 36, 58, 62, 65, 80, 318
Bath, Order of the, 176, 321
Beaulieu, 89
Beaulieu, Austrian General, 118, 121, 123, 135
Beauport, 16
Bellegarde, 94
Belle Poule, 43
Bellona, 105
Berry, Mr., 90
Bethune, Col. Drinkwater, 167, 176, 194
Beynton, 90, 91, 95
Bienvenue, 95
Blanche, 89, 100, 101
Blenheim, 149, 157, 201
Blockade of Brest, 263, 264, 265, 268, 269, 270, 271
Blondell, Colonel, 104
Blücher, 335
Boger, Mr., 71
Bogue, Fort, 148
Bombay Castle, 148
Bonaparte, Napoleon, 115, 118, 119, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 131, 146, 147, 148, 170, 247, 261, 268, 281, 288, 302, 303, 305, 307, 310, 313, 331, 332
Bonne Citoyenne, 157
Bordeaux, 40
Boscawen, 8, 19
Bott, mutineer, 197
Bougainville, 14
Bourbon, House of, 51
Bover, Lieutenant, 204, 205; Captain, 277, 278
Bowen, Mr., 58, 59, 95, 96
Boyne, 88, 90, 91, 98, 100, 101, 103
Braganza, House of, 313
Brazil, 314
Breakwater, Plymouth, 299, 300
Brenton, Captain, 319
Brest, 43, 255, 256 261; Plan of, 226
Bretagne, 50
Bridport, Lord, 152, 255, 257, 259

Brillon, Duc de, 64
Britannia, 65, 143, 149, 164, 166
British flag, 25
Brodie, Captain, 81, 82
Brougham, Lord, 284, 323
Bruix, French Admiral, 261
Brunswick, Duc de, 86
Buenos Ayres, 132
Burgh, General de, 130, 152
Burgoyne, 44
Burke, 86
Burton-on-Trent, 2, 3
Bute, Lord, 23, 135
Byng, 8

C

Cadiz, 56, 112, 117, 119, 122, 132, 178, 180, 190, 191, 192, 202, 207, 238, 240, 245
Cagliari, 142
Ça Ira, 117
Calder, Captain, 112, 143, 149, 168
Caldwell, Rear-Admiral, 105
Camel, 117
Campbell, Captain, 201
Campbell, *Lives of the Admirals*, 66
Campbell, Rear-Admiral, 44
Campbell, Sir Patrick, 275
Canada, 23
Candia, 227
Capraja, Island of, 130
Captain, 137, 143, 149, 167, 258
Carey, Mr., 281
Carnatic, 83
Carolina, South, 21
Castiglione, 147
Catherine, Empress, 37, 38, 39
Censure, Vote of, 107
Centaur, 198
Ceres, 89
Chab-Kyll, 1
Chablais, Duc de, 33
Channel Fleet, 43, 170, 189, 255, 257, 309, 312
Charlestown, 21
Chartres, Duc de, 45
Chatham, Lord, 42, 89
Cherbourg, 40
Cherokee Creek, Indians, 21
Chevalier de Tiernay, 22
Cillart, Chevalier de, 60
Clarence, Duke of, 124, 206
Clark's *Tactics*, 353
Clochetterie, Captain la, 43
Clyde mutiny, 186
Cockburn, Captain, 112
Coffin, Sir Isaac, 179, 197, 249, 250
Cohen, Captain Sir J., 275
Collingwood, 112, 140, 149
Colossus, 149, 157
Colpoys, Admiral, 151, 152, 204
Colville, Lord, 22
Commerce, Destroying, 113
Condorcet, 87
Consols fall, 170
Cook, Captain, 13
Coote, Colonel, 101
Copenhagen, 36, 39, 290
Cordova, Don José de, 154
Cordova, Don Luis de, 53
Cornwallis, Marquis, 75, 116; Admiral, 303, 312
Corresponding Society, 185
Corsica, Viceroy of, 129, 147; evacuation of, 140, 150, 170
Corunna, 53
Cotton, Sir Charles, 313
Courageous, 144
Courtliness, 34
Court-martial, Keppel, 47; 268
Couthon, 87
Craven, Captain, 120
Cronanburg Castle, 36
Cronstadt, 36
Culloden, 9, 143, 149, 157, 158, 159, 163, 167, 172; accident at Nile, 228
Cunningham, Captain, 188
Curtis, Captain, 65, 68
Curzon, Captain, 141

D

Dacres, Captain, 196
Danton, 87
Dart, 275
Davidson, mutineer, 197
De Grasse, 52, 56
D'Épée, Fort, 100, 104
Derby, Admiral, 56, 57
D'Esterre Darby, Captain, 233–9
De Vitri, pilot, 11
Devonshire, 5, 7
Diadem, 137, 149, 162
Dickaw, Baron, 8
Directory, French, 113, 114, 131
Discipline preserved, 202, 206; want of, 309
Dockyards, 285, 286, 289, 290, 297
Donkin, Sir Rufane, 106
Dorchester, 8
Douarnenez Bay, 256, 274
Drysdale, 7
Dundas, Adjutant-General, 89; General, 89, 91, 93, 100, 101, 103
Dundas, Lord Melville, 81
Duff, Consul, 133

Dumaresq, Lieutenant, 294
Duncan, Admiral, 183, 189, 216
Durell, Admiral, 11

E

Egmont, 149, 164
Elba, 130, 140, 149
Eliott, General, Governor of Gibraltar, 51, 64
Elliot, Sir Gilbert, 116, 150
Ellison, Captain, 199, 200
Etcherin River, 15
Éveille, 22
Excellent, 143, 149, 162
Experiment, 9

F

Faulknor, Captain, 93, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101
Fencibles, Sea, 310
Ferrajo, Porto, 129, 130, 146, 150, 153
Ferret, 4
Fleet-fighting, 113
Flora, 180
Florence, 128
Florida, 23
Formidable, 46
Foudroyant, 41, 44, 50, 52, 56, 58, 59, 60, 61, 63, 65, 67, 69, 71, 79, 90, 266, 284
Fox, 141, 193
Fox, Mr., 57, 80, 283, 311, 314
France, War, 7
Franklin, Benjamin, 34
Frazer Highlanders, 15
Fremantle, Captain, 112, 126, 193, 345
French, 35; pass into Mediterranean, 248

G

Gallion Bay, 93
Garlies, Lord, 156
Garonne, 22
Gauteaume, Honoré, 114
Geary, Admiral, 56
Gell, Rear-Admiral, 88
Genoa, Gulf of, 117, 118; 25, 115, 117, 124, 125, 135
Genoese officer, 25
Gentile, General, 139
George III., 282, 309, 316, 317, 318
Gibraltar, 56, 115, 141; siege of, 64, 65, 66
Gibraltar, 144
Gloucester, 3, 4
Goliath, 149, 164
Gordon, Colonel Sir Charles, 92
Gosport, 22, 23
Government, British, 87
Graves, Governor, 22
Greenwich, 3, 80
Grenville, George, 22
Grenville, Thomas, 316
Grey, Captain, 90, 93, 94, 96, 100, 112, 337
Grey, General Sir Charles, 80, 88, 92, 93, 101, 102, 103, 105, 106, 107, 255
Griffiths, Lieutenant, 159
Grozier, 100, 104
Guadeloupe, 103
Guadet, 87
Guichen, De, 55, 56
Guillelmine, 52

H

Halifax, 11, 22
Hallowell, Captain, 112, 156
Hamburg, 39
Hamilton, Sir Edward, 275
Hamilton, Lady, 348
Hannibal, 293
Hardinge, 356
Hardy, Sir Charles, 52
Harland, Admiral Sir Robert, 44, 46
Hasraville, Comte de, 22
Havre, 39
Havre de Grace, 21
Hawke, Sir Edward, 8, 19, 272
Hector, 43
Henry, Prince, Duke of Gloucester, 33
Hermione, 275
Hill, Admiral Sir Henry, 98
Hill, Captain, 277
Hoche, 134
Holland, 39, 57
Holmes, Admiral, 14
Homer, 2
Hood, Captain, 112
Hood, Lord, 110
Hope, Captain, 112
Hotham, Commander-in-Chief in Mediterranean, 110, 111, 114
Howe, Lord, 54, 57, 63, 65, 66, 67, 68, 83, 312
Hughes, Sir Edward, 52
Hugues, Victor, 103, 104, 105

I

Inconstant, 126
Independence of Colonies, 86

Inglefield, Commissioner, 116
Ireland, Expedition to, 146
Irish House of Commons, 108, 109
Irresistible, 149, 157, 162

J

Jackson, Mr., 142, 159, 249
Jackson, Rev. H., 2
Jervis, Captain W. H., 314
Jervis, Sir John. *See* St. Vincent
Jest, 181, 182, 183
Jobbery, 256, 297

K

Keith, Lord, 247, 248
Kennedy, 15
Kent, 41
Kent, Duke of, 94, 100, 101, 102
Keppel, Admiral the Hon. A., 41; Admiral Viscount, 57
Kingfisher, 190
King George, 22
Knowles, Sir Charles, 90, 148

L

Lafayette, 86
Lagos Bay, 169, 171
Lángara, Don Juan de, 132, 134, 146
Latona, 68
Lavoisier, 87
Lawley, Sir R., 345
Leader of men, 113
Leek, 2
Leghorn, 33, 115, 117, 134; taken by French, 126, 127
Lemprière, 4
Leviathan, 89
Levi, Point, 15
Liberality, 245
Licorne, 22, 43
Lion, 198
Littleton, Governor, 21
Lively, 112, 154, 157, 167, 170
Liverpool Corporation, 108
Lizard, 54
Loano, 115, 122
Lombardy, 123
Lonato, 147
London, 204
Lords, House of, 326
Louisbourg, 11
Louis XVI., 87
Lubeck, 39

M

Macbride, Captain, 58
[illegible]land, Captain, 190, 330
Majestic, 105
Maker church, 53
Malesherbes, 87
Mann, Rear-Admiral, 112, 114, 117, 119, 131, 132, 133, 134, 137, 140, 141, 147; letters, 343, 344
Mantua, 148
Marat, 87
Marcot, Fort, 100
Marine Corps, 290
Markham, Admiral, 313
Marlborough, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202
Marriage, 83, 90, 91
Marseilles, 27, 34
Marshall, Captain, 43
Martinique, 89, 91
Massachusetts, 22
Maximilian, Elector Joseph, 52
Mazzaredo, Don José de, 155, 218, 219, 292, 295, 296
Meaford, 1
Mediterranean, 25, 34, 110, 124, 133, 136, 138, 216, 259, 261; abandoned, 139; British force for, 208; St. Vincent leaves, 253; Plan of, 115; orders of, 260
Melville, Lord, 81, 300, 312
Meux, 2
Middleton, Captain, 180
Miguel, S., 67
Milan, 119, 121, 123
Mincio, 123
Minerva, 167
Minorca, 8, 217, 219, 248, 251
Minto, letter to Nelson, 208
Mohammed, 86
Monckton, General, 15, 16, 18
Montcalm, 12, 14, 17, 18
Montmorency, Falls of, 12, 13
Moreno, Spanish Admiral, 292
Murray, Brigadier, 14, 19
Murray, Rear-Admiral, 89
Mutiny, 20, 183–192, 197–206

N

Namur, 149
Naples, 115, 116, 125; Queen of, 125
Napoleon. *See* Bonaparte
Neapolitan flotilla, 121
Nelson, 112, 113, 115, 116, 118, 120, 121, 124; Commodore, 126, 130, 135, 145, 162, 168, 193, 194, 208; letters from, 251, 252, 306, 350; *re* Parker, 1804, 352

Nelson, Lady, letter from, 346
Neptune, 10, 11
Newcastle, Duke of, 23
Newfoundland, 11, 22
New York, 21, 22
Nice, 118, 119
Niger, 157
Nizo, Marquis of, 206, 207
Noble, Lieutenant, 121
Nootka Sound, 83
North, Lord, 57, 75, 79
Northesk family, 2
Northumberland, 22
Nottingham, 7, 8
Nugent, Captain, 93, 97

O

Oakes, Colonel, 345
O'Brien, Capt. William, 357
Odell, Roger, 242, 243, 244
O'Hara, Governor, 133, 147, 154, 220
Orde, Sir John, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 255
Orion, 162
Orleans, Duke of, 207
Orvilliers, Comte d', 43, 44, 45, 46
Osborne, Rear-Admiral, 317

P

Pallas, 141
Palliser, Vice-Admiral, 44, 45, 46
Palmer, Captain E., 333, 357
Panther, 68
Papal States, 125
Paris, Visit to, 36
Parker, Captain William, 315, 333
Parker, Miss, 33, 83
Parker, Mr. John, 3
Parker, mutineer, 185
Parker, Sir William, 66, 149, 151, 153, 162, 174, 179, 180, 181
Pavia, 123
Peace, Fontainebleau, 23; petitions for, 288
Peard, Captain, 203
Pégase, 60, 61, 62, 63, 71
Pellew, Admiral Sir Edward, 151, 255, 276, 304, 311
Peltier, M. Pléville de, 29, 30, 34
Peter the Great, 37
Piedmont, 123
Pierre, Forts of, 93
Pinkthorne, coachman, 3
Pitt, 18, 74, 282, 307, 308, 309
Placentia, 22
Plans of battle of St. Vincent, 157, 158, 161, 162, 163
Plymouth, 53, 83, 263
Pope, 125, 217, 218, 219
Port Mahon, 57, 64, 251
Ports Louis and L'Orient, 40
Portsmouth, 56, 58, 83, 263
Porcupine, 13, 14
Port Royal, 3
Potemkin, 37
Prince, 7, 8, 84
Prince George, 149, 157, 160, 162
Princess Royal, 197
Principe d'Asturias, 160, 161
Prize-money, 80
Prescott, General, 89
Privateer, a French, 9
Prussia, 52, 83,
Public expenditure, 83
Purvis, Captain J. C., 204, 205; George, 341

Q

Quebec, 10, 11; Plan of, 12, 13
Quebec, 89
Queen, 61
Quiberon, 19

R

Rabi, pilot, 11
Ramillies, 266
Raside, 29
Reform, 79
Repairs of ships, 232
Revulsion of feeling in England, 171
Ribbon, Red, 63
Richery, 114, 119, 120, 134
Richmond, Duke of, 41, 68
Rickets family, 1, 2
Rickets, Edward, 69, 338
Rickets, Mr. Henry, 61
Rickets, Mrs., 32, 33, 314, 355
Riou, Captain, 97
Ripon, Lord, 338
Robertson, Captain Lewis, 104
Robespierre, 87
Robuste, 22
Rochambeau, 92
Rochefort, 40
Rochetts, 254, 312, 333, 336
Rockingham Government, 41, 74
Rodney, Sir George, 21, 64, 76
Roland, 87
Romanzoff, 38
Rouge, Cape, 15
Royal Anne, 5
Royal George, 5, 7

S

St. Albans, 148
St. Charles, 17
St. Christopher, 103
St. George, 116, 148, 203, 258
St. Helena, 330
St. Just, 87
St. Lawrence, 11
St. Petersburg, 36, 37, 38, 39
St. Valentine's Day, 171
St. Vincent, as J. Jervis, 1; school, 2; chooses the sea and not the law 3; outfit, 3; ordered to Chatham, 7; sails with Boscawen, 8; action with xebeque, 9; with Admiral Saunders, 11; at Quebec, 14; with Wolfe, 16; returns home in *Scorpion*, 19; in the *Albany*, 20; with Rodney, 21; *Gosport* pays off, 23; in the *Alarm*, character, 24; Turkish slaves, 26; affection for Barrington, 32; Mrs. Rickets, Miss Parker, 33; French, 35; on Continent with Barrington, 36; object attained, 40; *Foudroyant*, 41; in Keppel's action, 41–50; Flag-Captain to Lord Shouldham, 52; Sir Charles Hardy, 54; action with *Pégase*, 58–63; receives Red Ribbon and baronetcy, 63; Sir John Jervis at Gibraltar, 65–8; Letter *re* Edward Rickets, 69; generosity, 70; member for Launceston and parliamentary life, 79–82; marriage, 83; promoted to Rear-Admiral, 83; as Vice-Admiral, 88; Commander-in-Chief in West Indies, 88; address to Faulknor, 99; returns home, Sir Charles Grey, 107; appointed to command in Mediterranean, 112; his outlook, 113; meeting with Nelson, 113; cruising off Corsica, 117; his fleet in distress, 122; a wearisome command, 124; *re* Bonaparte, 127; collects his forces, Admiral Mann, 131; leaves San Fiorenzo, 142; high efficiency, 144; letter from Lord Spencer, 145; in the Tagus, 148; in quest of Spanish fleet, 154; battle of St. Vincent, 154–174; his tactics, 173–5; blockade of Cadiz, 178; his humour, 182; deals with mutinous ships, 186–206; at Teneriffe, 193; at Lisbon, 207; sends Nelson to Mediterranean, 208; Sir John Orde, 213–216; decides to take Minorca, 217; the Pope, 217–219; arrives at Gibraltar, 219; dealing with spy, 220–224; Sir Sidney Smith, 224–227; Troubridge's letter, 228; the ships from the Nile, 231; D'Esterre Darby, 233–239; ill-health, 239, 240, 251; makes water-tanks, 240; Roger Odell, 242-244; liberality, 245, 246; garrison library, 247; sends information to Nelson and Lord Keith, 248–250; letter from Nelson *re* ill-health, 252; strikes his flag, 253; Sir John Orde, 254, 255; goes afloat, 257; the Channel Fleet, 259; Mediterranean order, 260; Brest, 262; the gale, 264; rigid discipline, 265, 266; Dr. Baird, 269–271; sets an example, 274; shifts his flag into *Royal George*, 276; generosity, 277, 278; the Naval Asylum dinner, 279; Torr Abbey, 281; appointed to Admiralty, interview with King, 283; dealings with dockyards, 286, 289; the Royal Marines, 290; proposes vote of thanks to Sir J. Saumarez, 296; reforms, 298, 299; Plymouth Breakwater, 299, 300; blamed by Pitt, 304, 308, 311; interview with King, 309; hoists Union at the main on *Hibernia*, 313; goes to the Tagus, 313; death of his nephew, 314; Captain Parker, 315; Mr. Grenville, 316; interview with King, 316–318; withdraws from active service, 319; character, 319–323; Order of Bath, 321; loss of Troubridge, 323; politics, 325; tolerance, 329; Napoleon, 330–332; his nephew, 332, 334; death, 337
St. Vincent, Battle of, 154–174; Report of, 171; comments on, 174
St. Vincent, Lady, death of, 332
Sallée, Fort, 92
Salvador del Mundo, 165

Sandwich, First Lord, 43, 55, 57
San Fiorenzo, Bay of, 117, 137, 139
San Fiorenzo, 187, 189, 356
San Josef, 163, 165, 314
San Nicolas, 163, 165
Santisima Trinidad, 163, 165
Saratoga, 75
Sardinians, 119
Saumarez, Sir James, 291, 292, 294, 295, 296
Saunders, Admiral, 8, 10, 11, 16, 19, 21, 80
Saunders, Captain, 7
Savona, 118
Savoy, 119
Scorpion, 19, 20
Scroope, Captain, 4
Seamanship, 24, 30
Senegal, 23
Seymour, Lord Hugh, 173
Shelburne, Lord, 57, 80
Shouldham, Lord, 52
Slavery, 25, 26, 39
Smith, Joseph, 29
Smith, Sir Sidney, 224, 225, 226, 227
Smyrna, 115
Sounier, Mont, 94
Southampton, 121, 153
Spencer, 293
Spencer, Lord, 111, 145, 208, 296
Spencer, Lady, 347
Sphinx, 4, 5
Spies, 304
Spithead, 54
Spy at Gibraltar, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224
Staël, Mme de, 87, 126
Stafford, 82
Staffordshire, 1, 2, 5
"State the Case" men, 184
Strachan, Admiral Sir Richard, 3
Strachan, Captain, 9
Strachan, "Dicky," 3
Suffren, 52
Sunderland, 17
Superb, 292, 293
Swynfen, John, 1
Syren, 22

T

Tagus, 148, 178, 179, 181, 183, 197, 204
Tamworth, 1
Teneriffe, Santa Cruz de, 193
Terpsichore, 89, 152
Terror, Reign of, 87
Tête de Mort, 28
Theseus, 105
Thompson, Commodore, 91
Tinling, Rear-Admiral C., 66
Tonnant, 314
Torbay, 57, 265, 270, 280
Torr Abbey, 280, 281
Toulon, 114, 116, 118, 121, 122, 124, 336
Townshend, General, 15, 16
Townshend, Hon. G., 3
Trafalgar, 90
Troubridge, 112, 118, 121, 158, 159, 179, 216, 257, 266, 288, 323, 324
Tucker, 285
Turkey, 38
Turkish slaves, 25, 26
Tuscany, 123, 126, 127
Tyrol, 123, 148

U

Ulysses, 95
Undaunted, The, 99
Unicorn, 21
Union Jack, 313
United Irishmen, 185
Ushant, 44

V

Valentine's Day, St., 171
Vanstabel, Admiral, 148
Vaughan, General Sir John, 105
Venerable, 291
Venstible, Admiral, 89
Vergniaud, 87
Versailles, 53
Vestale, La, 151, 152
Veteran, 92, 100, 101
Victory, 112, 117, 136, 149, 154, 156, 158, 165
Victualling, Commissioners of, 128
Ville de Paris, 50, 179, 192, 205, 251, 257, 258, 264, 265, 277, 280
Villeneuve, Admiral, 146, 306
Voltaire, 37
Voltri, 128

W

Walpole, Minister at Lisbon, 133
Warren, Sir John Borlase, 255, 333
Washington, 75
Water-tanks, Gibraltar, 240
Wear and tear, 135

Wells, Mr., 50
Wenlock, Lord, 3
West Indies, 7, 23, 88
Wheeler, Captain, 4, 5
Whigs, 2, 74, 80, 82
Whyte, Brigadier-General, 92
Wickens, Henry, 29
William and Mary, 5
Williamson, 4
Wilmot, Captain, 276
Winchelsea, 100
Windsor Castle, 132
Wolfe, Major-General, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18
Wurmser, 124, 126, 138

Y

Ygea, spy, 247
Yorke, Mr. Charles, 311
Yorktown, 75, 78

Z

Zealous, 116, 144
Zebra, 89, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100

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